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ABSTRACT

This document reports and analyzes information on Colorado charter schools for the 2000-01 school year. Eleven parts cover various aspects of these schools: (1) "Introduction"; (2) "The Colorado Charter Schools Act"; (3) "State Board of Education Disposition of Appeals"; (4) "The Characteristics of Colorado Charter Schools"; (5) "Characteristics of Colorado Charter School Students"; (6) "Governance of Colorado Charter Schools"; (7) "Colorado Charter School Teachers and Administrators"; (8) "Measure of Charter School Performance"; (9) "Waivers"; (10) "Financial Issues in Colorado Charter Schools"; and (11) "Voices from the Field." Highlights for the 2000-01 school year include: 77 charter schools operated in the state, which represented 4.6 percent of all public schools; 20,155 students were enrolled, representing 2.8 percent of total public-school enrollment; the average student-to-teacher ratio was 14.25 to 1; 60 percent of the charter schools used a recognized national reform model as the foundation of their educational program; racial/ethnic minority students made up 26.3 percent of the total charter-school enrollment; many charter schools have extensive waiting lists, and the majority of them have consistently demonstrated high rates of parent satisfaction and have met or exceeded their reenrollment goals; and 28 charter schools received startup/implementation grants totaling $3,770,000. An appendix contains the Colorado Charter Schools Evaluation Data Matrix 2000-01 and a list of focus-group questions. (RT)

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The State of Charter Schools in Colorado 2000-01:

The Characteristics, Status and Performance Record of Colorado Charter Schools

April 2002

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Joy Fitzgerald, an independent consultant, coordinated the data collection for the study and served as the primary author of this report. Dr. Kathy Green and Dr. Lurcretia Peebles of the University of Denver completed the analysis of CSAP data discussed in Part Eight of the report.

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Executive Summary: Colorado Charter Schools at a Glance - 2000-01

Scope

- **Number of Charter Schools Operating**: 77 schools, which represented 4.6% of all Colorado public schools.

- **Total Enrollment**: 20,155 students, which represented:
  - An increase of 13.1% from charter school enrollment in 1999-2000
  - 2.8% of the total public school enrollment
  - The equivalent enrollment of the 10th largest school district in the state.

Charter School Characteristics

Charter School Size:
- Average Enrollment: 262 students.
- The enrollment of individual charter schools ranged from 17 students to 830 students.
- 52% of charter schools operating in 2000-01 served less than 200 students.

Student-to-Teacher Ratio:
- Average student-to-teacher ratio: 14.25 to 1.
- Median student-to-teacher ratio: 13.8 to 1.
- The student-to-teacher ratio of individual charter schools ranged from a ratio of 7.6 to 1 to a ratio of 31.0 to 1.

Grade Level Configurations:
- 60% of charter schools offered programs that fell outside traditional grade level configurations (elementary, middle and high schools).
- 40% of the charter schools operating in 2000-01 were K-8 schools, an additional 13% were K-12 schools.

Creation Status:
- 83% of the charter schools operating in 2000-01 were newly created at the time of their opening. The remaining 17% were public school conversions.

Educational Program:
- 60% of the charter schools operating in 2000-01 used a recognized national reform model as the foundation of their educational program.

- Twenty-nine charter schools used the Core Knowledge model, representing 38% of the total cohort of charter schools operating in 2000-01. Four schools each used the next most popular models -- Montessori and Expeditionary Learning/Outward Bound .

- Colorado charter schools offered a range of diverse educational practices and programs.

- The determination of whether the educational programs offered by the charter schools were innovative, or more innovative than those offered in conventional public schools, is a subjective one. Routine instructional practices in some schools may be highly inventive in others. Moreover, the same reform strategy is often expressed distinctly in different schools because of each school's unique context for reform.

Assessment Tools Used by Charter Schools:

- Of the charter schools operating in 2000-01:
  - 87% administered norm-referenced tests
  - 64% administered criterion-referenced tests
  - 68% administered performance assessments.

- 90% of the charter schools reported using more than one assessment in addition to the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP). Almost all charter schools administered parent surveys and tracked behavior indicators (disciplinary referrals, suspension and expulsion rates).

Charter School Services to Students with Disabilities:

- Most Colorado charter schools used an insurance model to fund special education services. Under this model, charter schools paid a flat per pupil rate to the district and the district provided needed services to students with disabilities. A recent study involving surveys and focus groups of Colorado charter school principals and district special education directors found that most special education directors were satisfied with this financial arrangement, while the majority of charter school principals were not.

- Other findings of interest in the recent CDE-funded study: About 70% of special education directors reported supportive, positive relationships between their districts and the charter schools within them, while only 10% of the charter school administrators reported such relationships. One-third of the charter school administrators who participated in the study recognized that their schools are not attractive to parents of children with disabilities. Charter school principals and district special education directors expressed a shared concern that charter school personnel do not understand fully their legal responsibilities to students with disabilities. Both groups indicated a desire to address this lack of knowledge.

Colorado Charter School Students.

- The cohort of charter schools operating in 2000-01 was notably more racially and economically diverse than in prior years, but continued to serve a smaller percentage of racial/ethnic minority students and students eligible for free/reduced-price lunch than the state public school average.

- **Racial/ethnic minority students** made up 26.3% of the total enrollment of charter schools in 2000-01, an increase of over 40% from the percentage of students of color served by charter schools in the fall of 1997. The percentage of racial/ethnic minority students served by individual charter schools ranged from 0% to 98.6%.

- **Students who were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch** were 17.6% of the total charter school enrollment in 2000-01. This figure represented an increase of over 40%

from the charter school average in 1997. The percentage of students eligible for free/reduced-price lunch served by individual charter schools ranged from 0% to 89.3%.

- Charter Schools served 1,195 **students with disabilities** in 2000-01, representing 5.9% of total charter school enrollment.

Governing Board Composition

- Most (40%) charter schools had a governing board comprised of parents, school staff and community members. Eighteen percent of the schools had boards comprised of parents only and another 16% had boards comprised of parents and community members only.

- Parents held a majority on the governing boards in 52% of the charter schools operating in 2000-01.

Charter School Teachers

Salary:
- Average teacher salary: $28,835
- The average teacher salary of individual charter schools ranged from $17,453 to $41,682.

Teacher Experience:
- Average teacher experience: 6 years
- The average teacher experience in individual charter schools ranged from one year to 17 years.

Educational Background:
- 26.0% of charter school teachers held a Masters Degree or higher post-secondary degree.

Tenure:
- 91% of teachers employed in charter schools did not have tenure.
- The great majority of charter schools have received a waiver of the state law that governs the granting of tenure to teachers who have been employed by a school district for more than three continuous years.

Number of Professional Development Days:
- Average number of professional development days: 6.9 days
- The number of professional development days in individual charter schools ranged from one to 43 days.

Teacher Absentee Rate:
- Average teacher absentee rate: 2.5%
- The teacher absentee rate in individual charter schools ranged from 0% to 11.7%.

Teacher Turnover:
- Average teacher turnover rate: 24.4%
- The teacher turnover rate in individual charter schools ranged from 0% to 74.7%.

Charter School Administrators

Salary:

- Average charter school administrator salary: $55,218
- The average administrator salary in individual charter schools ranged from $27,954 to $109,693.

Experience in Education Field:

- Average: 6 years
- The average experience of charter school administrators in individual charter schools ranged from no prior experience to 31 years.

Tenure of Head Charter School Administrators:

- Average: 2.5 years
- The average tenure of head or primary charter school administrators in individual charter schools ranged from 1 year to 8 years.

Measures of School Performance

Indicators of Safety and School Environment

- Pursuant to state law, annual School Accountability Reports provide information on six features that are associated with safe and orderly schools. Of the charter schools operating in 2000-01,
    - 95% allowed after-school programs
    - 30% required school uniforms
    - 92% encouraged community programs in the school building
    - 59% conducted home visits
    - 86% had a closed campus
    - 91% required parent conferences.

- The number of disciplinary incidents reported on each charter school's School Accountability Report was divided by the school's enrollment to produce a rate of disciplinary incidences. The average rate of disciplinary incidents in charter schools during 2000-01 was 14.8%. The rate in individual charter schools ranged from 0% to 248%. The median rate was 6%.

Parent Involvement in Colorado Charter Schools

- As a general rule, the cohort of charter schools operating in 2000-01 engaged parents at a high level of involvement, as measured by the total number of hours volunteered by parents or family members during the school year and/or the percentage of families in the school who volunteered.

- Seventy-one (92%) of the charter schools operating in 2000-01 regularly administered a parent satisfaction survey.

- Thirty-three (44%) of the charter schools operating in 2000-01 used a required parent contract to spell out the school's expectations of parents related to their involvement in the school and in their children's education.

Market Based Indicators

- Many Colorado charter schools have extensive waiting lists that demonstrate demand for the school on the part of interested parents.

- The majority of Colorado charter schools has consistently demonstrated high rates of parent satisfaction and has met or exceeded their re-enrollment goals.

Charter School Renewals/Closures

- From the fall of 1993 to the fall of 2000, local school districts granted 80 charters in the State of Colorado. During this period, three of those charters schools were closed, representing a closure rate of 3.8%.

- Two of the three closures were voluntary. The third resulted from a local board's decision not to renew a charter school's original charter.

Charter School Performance on the CSAP

As a group, the charter schools tended to perform well on the Colorado Student Assessment Program. As shown on Table I below, the charter school average exceeded the state average by 10 percentage points on the 4th grade Reading assessment, 10 points on the 5th grade Reading assessment, and nine points on the 7th grade Writing assessment. The charter school average trailed the state average by five points on the 9th grade Reading assessment.

The number of schools reported on Table I is smaller than the total number of schools that administered the CSAP assessments in the state for two reasons. First, the data used for this analysis only included schools that reported results (e.g., schools in which more than 16 students took the test). Second, the data files available from CDE for this analysis were organized by separate ethnic groups within a school rather than for the school in aggregate. Therefore, this analysis may also have excluded smaller charter schools that reported results overall, but whose results did not appear in the data files for particular ethnic groups because the number of students in each group was less than 16.

Table I: Comparison of Weighted and Non-Weighted Charter School Average CSAP Scores with Average Scores for the State of Colorado

	4th Grade Reading	5th Grade Reading	7th Grade Writing	9th Grade Reading
State Average (N)	63% (756)	64% (754)	41% (293)	63% (331)
Non-weighted Charter School Average (N)	75.66% (37)	74.39% (34)	50.69% (36)	49.11% (28)
Weighted Charter School Average (N)	73.14% (37)	73.13% (34)	49.74% (36)	58.33% (28)

(N) is the number of schools included in the calculation.

Table I shows both weighted and non-weighted charter school averages. Weighting accounts for the different sizes of schools within a category when calculating an average for that category. The weighted charter school score is calculated by multiplying the percentage proficient and advanced for a school by the number of students in that school who took the test. While weighting is generally considered a more accurate way to present the average scores of schools of differing sizes, it allows a very large school with very poor scores to impact the overall picture in a negative way.

Charter Schools Compared To "Matched" Public Schools

The Colorado Charter Schools Act specifically directs that this report "shall compare the performance of charter school pupils with the performance of ethnically and economically comparable groups of pupils in other public schools who are enrolled in academically comparable courses."

Such a comparative analysis has to be considered in the context of the following data issues and challenges. First, because there were so many fewer charter schools than non-charter public schools, the charter school averages were more affected by the performance of a school or group of schools at either end of the performance spectrum than the non-charter school averages were. Additionally, when the charter schools' scores were distributed across various categories for purposes of matching or comparing results, the number of schools in any one category often fell below 15. A commonly held research standard is that results should not be reported when the N (or number of schools) is fewer than 15. Second, because charter schools, in general, tended to be smaller than non-charter schools, a higher percentage of charter schools administered the CSAP but were not able to report data than their non-charter public school counterparts. Third, the free/reduced-price lunch eligibility data likely was under-reported for charter schools.

To frame this comparative analysis, charter schools and non-charter public schools *that reported CSAP results* were "matched" within identified ranges:
- less than 20% minority and less than 20% eligible for free/reduced-price lunch;
- 21-40% minority and 21-40% eligible for free/reduced-price lunch;
- 41-60% minority and 41-60% eligible for free/reduced-price lunch;
- 61-80% minority and 61-80% eligible for free/reduced-price lunch; and
- 81-100% minority and 81-100% eligible for free/reduced-price lunch.

Each school's average percentage of students that scored at the proficient level or above was weighted by the number of students who took that test. Then all the weighted values for the individual charter schools were added up and averaged to produce a charter school average. The same process was applied for non-charter public schools. CDE was interested in exploring the relative performance of the various reform models adopted by the charter schools as part of the matched comparison analysis. The cohort of charter schools using the *Core Knowledge Sequence* was the only cohort of schools large enough to support such an analysis.

Table II shows the results of the matching. The number of both charter and non-charter schools shown in the table were less than the total number of schools that reported results on the respective CSAP assessments. This is because the matching process only captured the scores of schools with demographics that fell within the broad quintile bands. If, for example, a school served a high percentage of racial/ethnic minority students, but a low percentage of students who were eligible for free/reduced-price lunch, it would have fallen outside the quintile bands used for the matching.

Table II - Charter and Non-Charter Average Percentage of Students Scoring at the Proficient Level or Above Matched by % Minority and % Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Eligibility

	0-20% Minority & 0-20% F/R	21 – 40% Minority & 21-40% FR	41-60% Minority & 41-60% F/R	61-80% Minority & 61-80% F/R	81-100% Minority & 81-100% F/R
4th Grade Reading					
Charter Schools (N)	83.83% (23)	* (2)			* (1)
Core Knowledge Charter Schools (N)	86.58% (16)				
Non-Charter Schools (N)	79.0% (226)	60.48% (97)	51.63% (47)	43.74% (37)	23.08% (39)
5th Grade Reading					
Charter Schools (N)	84.38% (20)	* (2)	* (0)	* (0)	* (1)
Core Knowledge Charter Schools (N)	* (14)	* (2)			
Non-Charter Schools (N)	82.08% (219)	62.37% (88)	48.90% (36)	47.28% (34)	23.86% (40)
7th Grade Writing					
Charter Schools (N)	68.76% (19)	* (1)	* (1)	* (0)	* (1)
Core Knowledge Charter Schools (N)	* (12)	* (1)			
Non-Charter Schools (N)	51.79% (83)	35.16% (32)	23.89% (28)	* (9)	* (10)
9th Grade Reading					
Charter Schools (N)	* (8)	* (2)	* (1)		
Non-Charter Schools (N)	70.86% (110)	48.51% (25)	* (10)	* (4)	* (3)

(N) is the number of schools included in the calculation.
* Results were not reported because N was fewer than 15.

Two broad conclusions may be drawn from the data presented. First, students who attended charter schools in 2000-01 were less likely to report being eligible for free/reduced lunch and were less often minority students than students served by the state as a whole. Second, charter schools overall were performing about as well or better than their "matched" noncharter public schools at all grade levels.

Charter School Performance on the School Accountability Reports (SARs)

The Colorado School Accountability Reports, issued for the first time in the fall of 2001and covering the 2000-01 school year, rated the academic performance of public schools based on their overall CSAP scores from 3rd through 10th grade. CDE combined statistically the percentages of students achieving various levels of proficiency at each grade level to calculate a score for each academic assessment (reading, writing and math.)

The school accountability reporting process applied five ratings of overall academic performance: Excellent, High, Average, Low and Unsatisfactory. For the baseline year (2000-01), the percent of schools at each rating was pre-set by the state based on a curve rather than a straight standard. These preset percents for the ratings reflected logical cut-off points within the standardized normal distribution: 8% Excellent rating, 25% High Rating, 40% Average Rating, 25% Low Rating and 2% Unsatisfactory Rating.

x

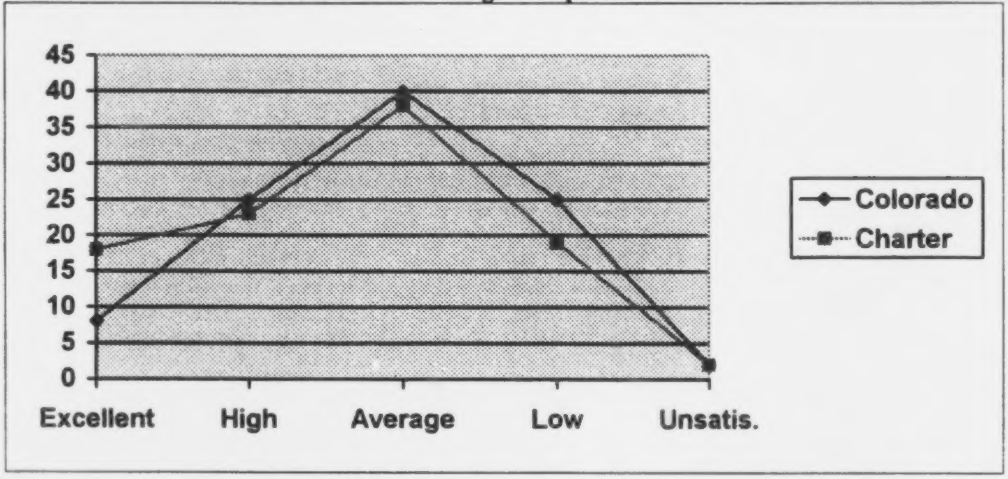
Schools that served multiple grade levels (elementary, middle and high) received separate accountability reports for each grade level. As a result, a charter school with a K-12 program would have published three separate SARs, one for elementary school (1-6), one for middle schools (grades 7-8) and one for high school (grades 9-12).

The 77 charter schools that were operating in 2000-01 received 117 SARs, reflecting the fact that many charter schools served students at more than one grade level (elementary, middle, high). Of this total,

- 18% (21 schools) were rated as "Excellent"
- 23% (27 schools) were rated as "High"
- 38% (45 schools) were rated as "Average"
- 19% (22 schools) were rated as "Low"
- 2% (2 schools) were rated as "Unsatisfactory."

The following chart shows this distribution of charter school ratings against the normal curve distribution that CDE applied to rank all public schools in the state. As the graph lines show, charter schools, as a cohort group, out-performed all public schools in Colorado, as a cohort group. The performance of the charter schools at the middle school level was particularly strong, while the performance at the high school level was weakest.

Distribution of Charter School SAR Ratings Compared to State Public School Distribution



Charter schools also were represented disproportionately among the highest performing schools on the CSAP assessments. While charter schools served 2.8% of the total public school enrollment and accounted for 4.6% of all Colorado public schools in 2000-01, they were:

- Three of the top 10 performing schools in the state on the 3rd grade Reading assessment.
- Two of the top 10 performing schools in the state on the 4th grade Reading assessment.
- One of the top 10 performing schools in the state on the 5th grade Mathematics assessment.
- Three of the top 10 performing schools in the state on the 5th grade Reading assessment.
- Five of the top 10 performing schools in the state on the 6th grade Reading assessment.
- Six of the top 10 performing schools in the state on the 7th grade Reading assessment.
- Seven of the top 10 performing schools in the state on the 7th grade Writing assessment.

- Six of the top 10 performing schools in the state on the 8th grade Science assessment.
- Five of the top 10 performing schools in the state on the 8th grade Mathematics assessment.
- Seven of the top 10 performing schools in the state on the 8th grade Reading assessment.
- Three of the top 10 performing schools in the state on the 9th grade Reading assessment.

Waivers of State Law by Charter Schools

- In 2000-01, the Colorado charter school law did not provide an automatic exemption from certain state laws, rules and regulations to charter schools. Instead, the law extended to charter schools the operation of the same waiver provision that has been available to every public school district in Colorado since 1989. This provision allowed the state board of education to waive education laws (Title 22), and the rules and regulations promulgated under those laws, subject to standards providing for educational achievement and enhancement of educational opportunity.

- The cumulative record established by the annual evaluations completed over the past six years establishes that the process for permitting charter schools to secure waivers has been adequate to enable these schools to overcome statutory barriers to the successful implementation of their distinctive programs. In the early years of the Colorado charter school movement, however, the waiver application and hearing process required a significant investment of time and effort on the part of the charter schools, their chartering districts, and the State Board of Education. The enactment of HB 00-1040 vastly simplified the method by which school districts apply for waivers from statute and regulation for public charter schools.

- Of the charter schools operating in the 2000-01 school year, 97% sought at least one waiver from the Colorado State Board of Education and 96% obtained multiple waivers.

Financial Issues

Funding:

- The average negotiated rate of funding for charter schools in 2000-01 was 95.2% of PPR.

Facilities:

- During the 2000-01 school year, charter schools were located in a wide variety of facilities including public schools; a museum; renovated churches, warehouses, office space, grocery stores, strip malls, and industrial space; modular buildings, and others.

- 62% of the charter schools leased or rented their facilities, 19% used facilities owned by the chartering district or donated by another organization, and 18% owned their own facilities.

- The percentage of their total budget that charter schools allocated to rent or bond/mortgage payments averaged 9.8%. The percentage of budget allocated by individual charter schools ranged from 0% to 27%.

Purchase of Services by Charter Schools:

- The Colorado Charter Schools Act allows charter schools to contract with the authorizing school district or with third parties for the purchase of services.

- The services charter schools most frequently purchased from third parties were professional development services (61%), legal services (56%), custodial/maintenance services (42%) and insurance services (42%).

- The services charter schools most frequently purchased from their chartering district were special education (79%), insurance (51%) and student assessment services (53%).

- The services charter schools most frequently provided in-house were professional development services (65%), human resources type services (64%), accounting services (59%), custodial/maintenance services (58%) and student assessment services (58%).

- Over one-third (38%) of the charter schools did not provide food services in 2000-01 and more than half (56%) did not provide transportation services.

- The service that authorizing school districts most frequently *required* charter schools to purchase from them was special education services, a requirement that affected nearly half of the charter schools. The second most frequent requirement related to student assessment services. About 23% of charter were required to purchase student assessment services from the sponsoring district in 2000-01.

Startup/Implementation and Dissemination Grants Awarded to Charter Schools

- During the 2000-01 school year, 28 Colorado charter schools received **startup/implementation grants** totaling $3,770,000. Charter schools used these funds primarily for the purchase of textbooks, furniture for the classrooms and professional development. Most of the schools that obtained these grant funds received no startup funding from their chartering district.

- The Colorado **Dissemination Grant** Program has four distinct application areas: assisting new or developing schools, professional development, documentation of proven, research-based practices, and assisting public school conversion to charter status. CDE awarded dissemination grants to charter schools totaling $347,445 in 2000 and $855,000 in 2001.

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The Colorado Charter Schools Act requires the State Board of Education to "report on the success or failure of charter schools, their relationships to other school reform efforts and suggested changes in state law necessary to strengthen or change the charter school program."[1]

The State of Charter Schools in Colorado: 2000-01 responds to this mandate by reporting and analyzing information from the 2000-01 school year related to:

- The characteristics of charter schools, their students and teachers
- The governance of charter schools
- Student achievement and school performance in charter schools
- Waivers of state law granted to charter schools
- Various finance issues related to charter schools
- The results of two focus groups of charter school board members and administrators, held to discuss lessons learned, charter school autonomy and other issues of interest.

This is the sixth annual report released by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) since the Colorado Charter Schools Act became law. The methodology and framework applied to this evaluation effort is different from prior years, reflecting changes in state law. The previous reports contained data about the performance of individual charter schools against the performance goals established in their individual charter applications over time. This method of tracking performance was informative. But it did not allow comparisons among charter schools or between charter schools and their non-charter public school counterparts.

Pursuant to the provisions of Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-7-605, commonly known as SB 01-186, in the fall of 2001, the Colorado Department of Education issued the first annual School Accountability Reports. These reports contain information about school characteristics and student performance on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP), as designated by statute. Their purpose is to allow the state, taxpayers and parents to monitor the progress of public schools to enhance information available to parents in making educational choices, accountability to the taxpayers, quality education, and the identification of best educational practices. (Refer to Part IX, Section 6 for a more extensive discussion of the purpose and operation of the School Accountability Reports.)

To keep this annual report on the status of charter schools consistent with the overall state accountability system, this report now incorporates the School Accountability Reports (SARs) as the primary means for monitoring the progress that "schools make toward providing students with an opportunity for a quality education in a safe learning environment."[2]

Growth of Charter Schools in Colorado

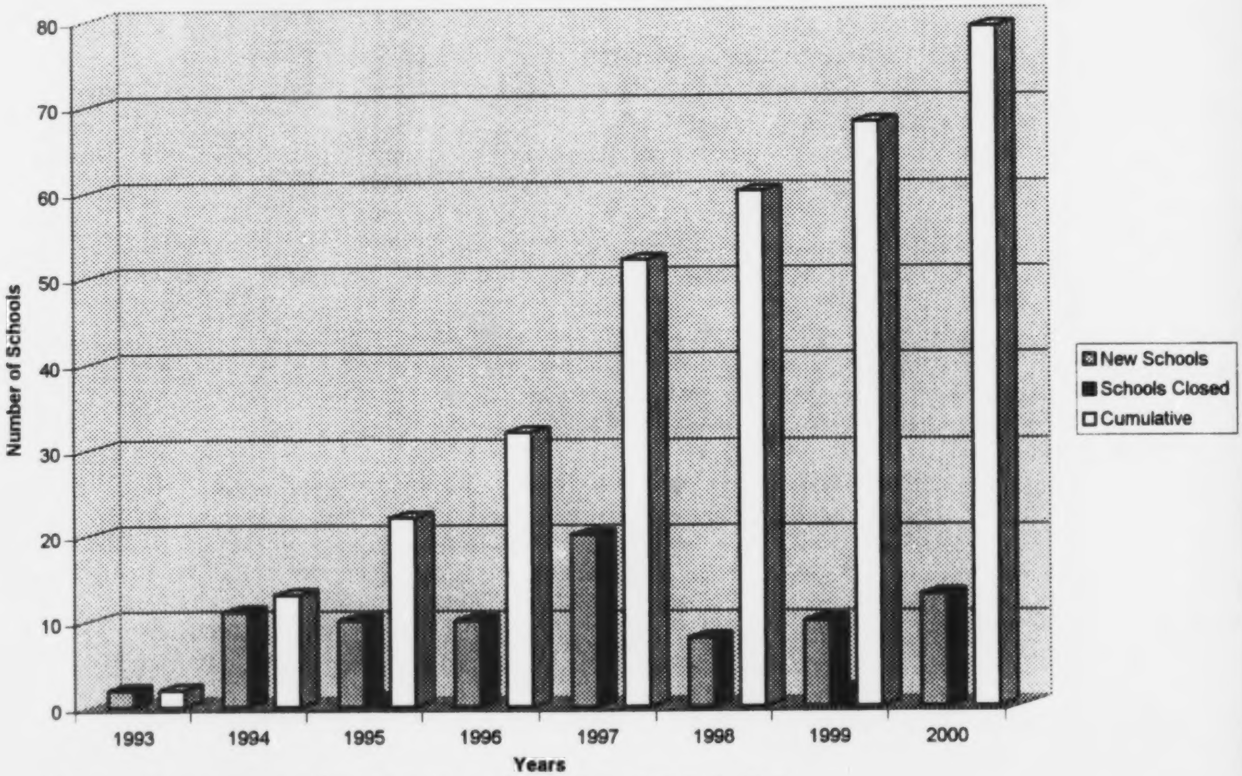
As shown in Table 1, the number of charter schools operating in Colorado has increased steadily since the General Assembly enacted the Colorado Charter Schools Act.

Table 1: The Number of Charter Schools Operating in Colorado by Year

Status of Charter School	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
New Charter Schools Opened	2	11	10	10	20	8	10	13
Charter Schools Closed			1				2	
Cumulative Number of Charter Schools	2	13	22	32	52	60	68	80*

**This figure reflects the merger of three charter schools into one.*

Figure 1: Number of Charter Schools in Colorado, 1993-2000



Charter Schools Operating in 2000-01

During the 2000-01 school year, 77 charter schools were operating in Colorado. These schools served 20,155 students, an increase of 13.1% from the total number of students served in the fall of 2000.

Charter school enrollment in 2000-01 represented 2.8% of the total public school enrollment. Charter schools represented 4.6% of all Colorado public schools. If all the charter schools were

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combined into an imaginary district, the enrollment of that district would be the tenth largest in the state.

A list of the charter schools operating in 2000-01, together with the name of their authorizing district and the year they opened, follows.

- Academy Charter School (Douglas County School District, 1993)
- Academy of Charter Schools (Adams 12 Five Star School District, 1994)
- Alta Vista Charter School (Lamar School District, 1998)
- Aspen/Carbondale Community School (Roaring Fork School District, 1995)
- Aurora Academy Charter School (Adams-Arapahoe School District 28J, 2000)
- Battle Rock Charter School (Montezuma-Cortez School District, 1994)
- The Black Forest School (Academy School District 20, 2000)
- Boulder Preparatory High School (Boulder Valley School District, 1997)
- Brighton Charter School (Brighton School District, 1998)
- Cardinal Community Academy (Keenesburg School District RE3J, 2000)
- Center for Discovery Learning (Jefferson County School District, 1994)
- Challenges, Choices and Images Learning Academy (Denver Public Schools, 2000)
- Cherry Creek Academy (Cherry Creek School District, 1995)
- Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy (Cheyenne Mountain School District, 1995)
- CIVA Charter High School (Colorado Springs District 11, 1997)
- The Classical Academy (Academy School District, 1997)
- Collegiate Academy of Colorado (Jefferson County School District, 1994)
- Colorado High School (Greeley School District 6, 1998)
- Community Challenge School (Denver Public Schools, 2000)
- Community of Learners Charter School (Durango School District 9-R, 1994)
- Community Prep Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11, 1995)
- Compass Montessori School (Jefferson County School District, 1998)
- Compass Montessori Secondary School (Jefferson County School District, 2000)
- Connect Charter School (Pueblo School District 70, 1993)
- Crestone Charter School (Moffat Consolidated School District, 1995)
- Crown Pointe Academy (Westminster District 50, 1997)
- Denver Arts and Technology Academy (Denver Public Schools, 2000)
- DCS Montessori Charter School (Douglas County School District, 1997)
- Eagle County Charter Academy (Eagle County School District, 1994)
- Elbert County Charter School (Elizabeth School District, 1997)
- Emerson-Edison Junior Charter Academy (Colorado Springs School District 11, 1997)
- Excel Academy (Jefferson County School District, 1995)
- The EXCEL School (Durango School District 9-R, 1994)
- External (UNC) University Lab School (Greeley School District 6, 1999)
- Frontier Academy (Greeley School District 6, 1997)
- Globe Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11, 1995)
- Guffey Community Charter School (Park County RE-2, 1999)[3]
- Horizons K-8 Alternative School (Boulder Valley School District, 1997)
- Indian Peaks Charter School (East Grand School District 2, 2000)
- James Irwin Charter High School (Harrison School District 2, 2000)
- Jefferson Academy (Jefferson County School District, 1994)
- Lake George Charter School (Park School District RE-2, 1996)

- Liberty Common School (Poudre School District, 1997)
- Lincoln Academy Charter School (Jefferson County School District, 1997)
- Littleton Academy (Littleton School District, 1996)
- Littleton Preparatory Charter School (Littleton School District, 1998)
- Marble Charter School (Gunnison-Watershed School District, 1995)
- Montessori Peaks Academy (Jefferson County School District, 1997)
- Monument Charter Academy (Lewis Palmer School District, 1996)
- Mountain View Core Knowledge School (Canon City School District, 1996)
- The Odyssey School (Denver Public Schools, 1998)
- Paradox Valley School (West End School District RE-2, 1999)
- Parker Core Knowledge Charter School (Douglas County School District, 1994)
- Passage Charter School (Montrose County School District, 1998)
- Peak to Peak Charter School (Boulder Valley School District, 2000)
- Pinnacle Charter School (Adams 12 Five Star School District, 1997)
- Pioneer Charter School (Denver Public Schools, 1997)
- Platte River Academy (Douglas County School District, 1997)
- Prairie Creeks Charter School (Strasburg School District, 1997)
- P.S. 1 (Denver Public Schools, 1995)
- Pueblo School for the Arts & Sciences (Pueblo School District 60, 1994)
- Renaissance School (Douglas County School District, 1995)
- Rocky Mountain Deaf School (Jefferson County School District, 1997)
- Roosevelt/Edison Charter School (Colorado Springs School District 11, 1996)
- Sojourner School (Boulder Valley School District, 1999)
- Southwest Open School (Montezuma-Cortez School District, 1999)
- Stargate Charter School (Adams 12 Five Star School District, 1994)
- Summit Middle Charter School (Boulder Valley School District, 1997)
- Swallows Charter Academy (Pueblo School District 70, 1996)
- Tutmose Academy High School (Harrison School District 2, 1999)
- Twin Peaks Charter Academy (St. Vrain School District, 1997)
- Union Colony Preparatory School (Greeley School District 6, 1997)
- Ute Creek Secondary Academy (St. Vrain School District, 2000)
- West End Learning Center – Alternative School (West End School District, 1999)
- Woodrow Wilson Academy (Jefferson County School District, 2000)
- Wyatt-Edison Charter School (Denver Public Schools, 1998)
- Youth & Family Academy (Pueblo School District 60, 1997)

All (100%) of the charter schools that operated during the 2000-2001 school year provided data for use in this report. Not all schools responded completely to the request for data issued in connection with this study. Additionally, the Colorado Department of Education database did not contain data for every charter school on all the issues discussed in this report. Therefore, the number of schools reporting with respect to specific characteristics or performance issues varies depending on the source of the data and the response rate of the charter schools.

Methodology

This descriptive evaluation rests on a paper review of student achievement and school performance data regularly maintained by the charter schools. The evaluation did not involve site visits to the schools and did not require supplemental data collection by the schools.

This evaluation approach is consistent with the Colorado Charter Schools Act, which places accountability for charter schools squarely with their chartering districts, and not with the state. As stated above, it is also consistent with the state's overall structure for public school accountability.

However, it has limitations. There are effective and promising practices going on in individual charter schools that are not captured by an evaluation of this sort. Similarly, there may be significant issues of concerns in individual charter schools that a paper review will not identify.

The data analyzed in this report came from the following sources:

- Charter school administrators completed a data matrix/school profile to provide 2000-01 information on the school's educational program, assessment program, waiting list, parent involvement, tenure of the lead administrator, governance, facilities, the school's purchase of services from the chartering district and third parties and transportation issues.

- CDE hosted two focus groups of charter school administrators to provide a forum for exploring qualitative issues in more depth. These focus groups engaged a broad cross-section of charter schools as measured by location, size, educational program, and years in operation.

- The Colorado Department of Education, Research and Evaluation Unit provided data regarding student enrollment, school demographics, suspension and expulsion rates, administrator education and experience, and teacher salary, education and experience. The data regarding student enrollment and student demographics were reported by the charter schools (through their chartering districts) on the October "count day" in 2000. The suspension and expulsion data was reported to CDE at the end of the 2000-01 school year, again through the chartering districts.

- The Colorado Department of Education, Assessment Unit provided data related to the performance of charter school and other public schools on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP).

- The School Accountability Reports ("SARs") printed in this report were obtained from the Colorado Department of Education web site. Some charter schools have raised concerns about the accuracy of the data as reported in the SARs.

PART TWO

THE COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOLS ACT

The Colorado Charter Schools Act has been amended extensively since its inception in 1993. Recent amendments reflect a strong pro-charter sentiment at the state level and an effective statewide lobby that is continually working to support charter schools. This section of the report summarizes the current (as of January 2002) content of The Colorado Charter Schools Act.

Purpose

The Colorado Charter Schools Act declares that its purpose is to:

- Improve pupil learning by creating schools with high, rigorous standards for pupil performance,
- Increase learning opportunities for all students, especially those with low levels of academic achievement,
- Encourage diverse approaches to learning and education and the use of different, proven or innovative teaching methods,
- Allow the development of different and innovative forms of measuring student performance,
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers,
- Provide parents and pupils with increased educational choice,
- Encourage parental involvement in public schools, and
- Hold charter schools accountable for meeting state board and school district content standards and to provide charter schools with a method to change accountability systems.[4]

General Provisions

Charter schools are public, nonsectarian, nonreligious, non-home-based schools. Charter schools operate "within" the districts that grant their charters and are accountable to the chartering district's board of education. Charter schools are subject to all federal and state laws and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special educational services. Charter schools must be open to any child who resides within the school district, but they are not required to alter the structure or arrangement of their facilities except as required by state or federal law. A majority of the charter school's students must live in the chartering district or contiguous districts. Enrollment decisions must be made in a non-discriminatory manner, as specified in the charter school application.[5]

Charter schools are administered by governing bodies as described in the charter application. Charter schools may organize as nonprofit corporations while retaining their status as public schools, but are not required to do so. Charter schools are governmental entities for purposes of tax-exempt financing. A charter school and the local board of education may agree to extend the length of the charter beyond five years for the terms of enhancing the terms of any lease or financial obligation.[6]

Charter schools may not charge tuition for K-12 programs and services, but may charge for before- and after-school services, extended day kindergarten, or pre-kindergarten classes.[7]

Charter schools operate free from school district policies and state laws and regulations as specified in their charter contracts. Local boards of education may waive the application of their regulations without seeking approval of the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education may waive state statutory requirements and rules promulgated by the state board, except those related to the state assessment program and the school finance act.[8]

Charter schools are responsible for their own operations, including preparation of budgets, contracting for services and personnel matters. Charter schools may, at their discretion, contract with their authorizing districts for the purchase of district services. Authorizing districts are required to provide such services to the charter school at cost. Authorizing districts may not charge charter schools rent for district facilities deemed available as negotiated by contract. Charter schools must make all decisions regarding the planning, siting and inspection of charter school facilities in accordance with applicable zoning regulations as specified by contract with the district. Charter schools have standing to sue and be sued in their own name for purposes of enforcing any contract.[9]

The Charter School Contracts

The Act contains specific timelines for submission and review of charter applications, which the charter applicant and the chartering district may waive by mutual agreement. Charter applicants must file with the local board of education by October 1 to be eligible for consideration the following school year. If an application is incomplete, the board will request the necessary information from the charter applicant. The school district's accountability committee reviews applications before the board of education considers them. The accountability committee must include one person with demonstrated knowledge of charter schools and one parent or guardian of a child enrolled in a charter school in the district. The local board is required to hold at least two community meetings on the proposed charter. The board must rule on the application within 75 days. The charter school and the school district must finalize their contract within 90 days of the time the board of education approves an application. The charter applicant and the local board may jointly waive these timelines. If the local board denies the application or imposes unacceptable conditions on the application, the applicant may appeal to the State Board of Education.[10]

The approved charter application serves as the basis for a contract between a charter school and the board of education of its chartering district. The contract between the charter school and the district must reflect all agreements regarding the waiver of school district policies and requests for waivers from state regulations and statutes. Any contract between the charter school and the local board of education approved between July 1, 2001 and July 1, 2010 must include a statement specifying how the charter school intends to use the one-percent increase in the statewide base per pupil funding as required by section 17 of article IX of the state constitution (Amendment 23).

Within ten days after the local board of education approves the contract, the local school board will deliver any request for release from state statutes and regulations to the state board. Within 45 days after receiving a request, the state board will grant or deny the request. The board must make any denials in writing. If the local board of education and the charter school do not receive notice of the state board's decision within 45 days after submittal of the request for release, the request is deemed granted.[11]

The charter application must specify:

- A mission statement, goals, objectives and performance goals for students in the school.
- Evidence that an adequate number of parents, teachers and students support the formation of the charter school.
- A detailed description of the school's educational program, pupil performance standards and curriculum, which must meet or exceed any content standards adopted by the school district in which the charter school is located, and which must be designed to enable each student to achieve the standards.
- A description of the charter school's plan for evaluating student performance, including the types of assessments and a timeline for meeting the school's performance goals.
- Evidence that the charter school's plan is economically sound for the charter school and the chartering district, a proposed budget and a description of the annual audit process.
- A description of the governance and operation of the charter school.
- An explanation of the relationships that will exist between the proposed charter school and its employees.
- The employment policies of the school.
- An agreement between the parties regarding their respective legal liability and applicable insurance coverage.
- A description of how the charter school plans to meet the transportation needs of its students.
- A description of the school's enrollment policy.
- A third-party dispute resolution process to resolve disputes that may arise concerning the implementation of the charter contract. If there is no provision in the contract, the Colorado Department of Education provides dispute resolution services. If either party refuses to participate in this process, the other party may appeal to the State Board of Education.[12]

Private or nonpublic home-based educational programs cannot be converted into public schools.[13]

A charter applicant is not required to provide personal identifying information concerning any parent, teacher or perspective pupil prior to the approval of the charter and the actual hiring of the teacher or enrollment of the student.[14]

The Appeal Process

The State Board of Education may review decisions of any local board of education concerning charter schools upon receipt of a notice of appeal or upon its own motion.[15]

The Charter Schools Act requires each charter school and its chartering district to agree on a third-party dispute resolution process to resolve disagreements that may arise concerning implementation of the charter contract. If the charter contract does not specify a dispute resolution process, the Colorado Department of Education provides dispute resolution services. If either party refuses to participate in this process, the other party may appeal to the State Board of Education.[16]

Under the Act's appeal procedures, the decision of a local board of education to deny, refuse to renew or revoke a charter or to unilaterally impose conditions that are unacceptable to the charter school or charter applicant, must be appealed by filing a written notice with the State Board of Education within 30 days of the decision. Within 60 days of receipt of the notice of appeal, the state board is required to hold a public hearing to review the decision of the local board and makes its findings. If the state board finds the local board's decision was contrary to the best interest of the pupils, school district or community, it must remand the decision to the local board with written instructions to reconsider. The instructions will include specific recommendations concerning the matters requiring reconsideration.

The local board must reconsider its decision with 30 days of the remand and make a final decision. If the local board's decision is still adverse, a charter applicant or operator may file a second appeal within 30 days of the final decision. Within 30 days of the receipt of the second notice of appeal, the state board is required to hold a second hearing and determine whether the local board's decision was contrary to the best interests of the pupils, school district or community. If such a finding is made the state board must remand the local board's final decision with instructions to approve the charter application. The state board's decision is final and not subject to appeal.[17]

Instead of the first appeal to the state board, the parties may agree to facilitation. Within 30 days after denial, nonrenewal or revocation, the parties may file a notice of facilitation with the state board. Facilitation will continue as long as both parties agree to its use. If one party substantially rejects facilitation, the local board of education will make a final decision. The charter applicant may file an appeal to the state board.[18]

If the notice of appeal or the motion to review by the state board relates to a local board's decision to grant a charter, the state board will review the appeal within 60 days after receipt of the notice to appeal. The state board will hold a hearing and review the decision of the local board. The standard of review is whether the decision of the local board was arbitrary and capricious or whether the establishment or operation of the proposed charter school would violate civil rights laws, violate a court order, threaten the health and safety of students in the school district, violate the provisions of the Act regarding the permissible number of charter schools, or be inconsistent with the equitable distribution of charter schools among school districts. If the state board makes such a determination, it will remand the case to the local board with instructions to deny the charter. The state board's decision is final and not subject to appeal.[19]

Charter Revocation and Renewal

With certain exceptions, a local school district may approve a new charter for a period of at least three years but not more than five years. Charter renewals may be made for periods not exceeding five years. The charter school must submit a renewal application to the local board no later than December 1 of the year prior to the academic year in which a charter will expire. The local board of education is required to rule on the renewal application no later than the following February 1 or a mutually agreed upon date. A renewal application must contain a progress report on the charter school and a financial statement that discloses the costs of operating the charter school.[20]

The local board of education may revoke or non-renew a charter for the following reasons:
- The charter school committed a material violation of the conditions, standards or procedures in the charter application.
- The charter school failed to make reasonable progress toward achieving the content or pupil performance standards set forth in its application.
- The charter school failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management.
- The charter school violated any provision of law from which the charter school was not specifically exempted.[21]

In addition, the local board of education may non-renew a charter upon a finding that it is not in the best interest of the pupils residing in the district to continue operation of the school. The local board's decision must state its reasons for revoking or not renewing a charter. Any decision not to renew a charter is subject to appeal.[22]

Employee Options

A teacher employed by a chartering district who is hired by a charter school is considered to be on a one-year leave of absence from the chartering district. The teacher and the district may agree to renew the leave for two additional one-year periods. At the end of this period, the district has the authority to determine the relationship between it and the teacher and provide notice to the teacher. The local board of education also has the authority to determine the status of school district employees who worked in charter schools and later seek re-employment with the district. Employees of charter schools are members of the Colorado Public Employee Retirement Association or the Denver Public Schools' Retirement Association.[23]

Transportation Plans

If a charter school's charter or contract includes provision of transportation services by the authorizing district, the charter school and the district are required to collaborate in developing a transportation plan to use school district equipment to transport students enrolled in the charter school to and from school and any extracurricular activities. The plan may include development of bus routes and plans for sharing the use of school district equipment for the benefit of students enrolled in charter schools of the district and students enrolled in other schools of the district.

Finance and Facility Issues

Facilities issues generally are resolved through negotiations between the charter school and its chartering district. The Act provides that a charter school may negotiate and contract with a school district, the governing body of a state college or university or any third party for the use of a school building or grounds. The Act prohibits chartering districts from charging rent to charter schools occupying district-owned facilities.[24] Recent amendments to the Act also make clear that charter schools may issue financial obligations that are exempt from state and federal income tax.[25]

Pupils enrolled in a charter school are included in the pupil enrollment of the chartering school district. The district receives full funding under the School Finance Act for each charter school student in the district. The Act requires the charter school to negotiate resources with its chartering district.[26] The charter school and authorizing school district negotiate funding under the contract at a minimum of *95% of the district per pupil revenues (PPR)* for each pupil enrolled in the charter school. The district may choose to retain the actual amount of the charter school's per pupil share of central administrative overhead costs for services actually provided to charter schools, up to 5% of the district PPR.[27] The Act specifically defines the cost items that can be included in overhead.[28]

Within 90 days after the end of each fiscal year, each school district shall provide each charter school within its district an itemized accounting of its central administrative overhead costs. Any difference between the amount initially charged to the charter school and the actual costs will be reconciled and paid to the owed party. Either party may request a third-party review of the itemized accounting at the requesting party's expense. The Colorado Department of Education will conduct the review and its determination will be final.[29]

As part of this funding formula, the charter school is required to transfer a specified amount for each student enrolled into accounts that the school can use only for capital reserve and risk management purposes.[30]

Each school district must provide federally required educational services to students enrolled in charter schools on the same basis as such services are provided to students enrolled in other public schools in the district. Unless the charter school and the chartering district negotiate an alternate arrangement, the charter school will reimburse the school district (on a per pupil basis) for the costs incurred by the district in providing federally required educational services.[31]

The charter school can contract with the school district for direct purchase of district services in addition to those included in central administrative overhead. The cost of these services are to be determined by dividing the district's cost by its total enrollment and multiplying this rate times the enrollment of the charter school.[32]

The authorizing school district must direct the proportionate share of state and federal resources generated by students with disabilities (or staff serving them) to the charter school enrolling the students. The proportionate share of moneys generated under other federal and state categorical aid programs also must be directed to charter schools serving students eligible for such aid, as required by the federal Charter School Expansion Act of 1998.[33]

For the 2000-01 budget year and thereafter, a qualified charter school will receive state education fund moneys from the authorizing school district in an amount equal to the percentage of the district's certified charter school pupil enrollment multiplied by the total amount of state education fund moneys distributed pursuant to Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-54-124.

Legislation Enacted in 2000-01 Related to Charter School Finance

H. 01-1272, Concerning School Funding to Purchase Textbooks, and Making an Appropriation in Connection Therewith, provided an additional $20 per pupil in FY 2000-01 for the purchase of standards-based textbooks. The bill required applying districts to pass on to any charter school the amount budgeted for each student enrolled in the charter school according to the October pupil count.

SB 01-237, Concerning the Financing of Capital Construction Needs of Charter Schools, provided for:

Pro rata distribution of bond revenues to qualified charter schools. Any qualified charter school that is similarly situated to a noncharter public school that will be constructed, repaired, or otherwise maintained or improved by an expenditure of a district's proceeds of bonds to be issued upon the approval of eligible electors of the district on or after July 1, 2001 shall receive a portion of the proceeds of said bonds.

The portion will be the ratio of the charter school's pupil enrollment at grade levels that are also served by one or more similarly situated noncharter public school to be improved/constructed, to the total pupil enrollment of all schools in the district that will be improved/constructed.

Any question of contracting bonded indebtedness on or after July 1, 2001, shall identify any qualified charter school that will receive bond proceeds.

For purposes of this section, a qualified charter school is similarly situated to a noncharter public school if:

- The noncharter public school is in the district that granted the qualified charter school's charter, and
- The qualified charter school and the noncharter public school both serve students at one or more of the same grade levels.[34]

Charter School Capital Construction Funding. Requires the General Assembly to appropriate state education fund moneys for the 2001-02 budget year and subsequent budget years for the purpose of assisting qualified charter schools that expend a specified percentage of their operating revenues for capital construction with their capital construction needs.

Qualified charter school is defined as:

- A charter school that will receive funding from a district pursuant to C.R.S. 22-30.5-112 for the budget year for which state education fund moneys are to be appropriated, and
- That received such funding from the district for the budget year two years prior to the budget year for which state education fund moneys are to be appropriated, and
- That expended more than three percent of its operating revenues for said prior budget year for capital construction, and
- Any other charter school if:
    - The charter school will receive funding from a district pursuant to C.R.S. 22-30.5-112 for the budget year for which state education fund moneys are to be appropriated, and
    - The proposed budget for the charter school submitted by the charter school to the district that granted its charter for the budget year for which state education fund moneys are to be appropriated indicates that the charter school will expend more than three percent of its operating revenues for said budget year for capital construction.

For the 2001-02 budget year and each budget year thereafter, a district shall be eligible to receive state education fund moneys for charter school capital construction pursuant to this section if at least one qualified charter school will be receiving funding from the district pursuant to C.R.S. 22-30.5-112 during the budget year for which state education fund moneys are distributed. No later than February 1 of each budget year, the Department of Education shall certify to the Joint Budget Committee of the General Assembly the total number of pupils expected to be enrolled in all qualified charter schools in the state during the next budget year.

State education fund moneys will be appropriated to the Department of Education, distributed to districts, and allocated to qualified charter schools in accordance with a per pupil allocation of an amount equal to 130% of the minimum capital reserve allocation per pupil ($248 X 130% = $322.40 per pupil).

PART THREE:

DISPOSITION OF APPEALS BY STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Colorado Charter Schools Act's provision for the appeal of local board decisions to the State Board of Education is described in Part Two of this report.

In House Bill 99-1274, the General Assembly clarified its intent that the State Board of Education has the authority to make a final decision on contract disputes between charter schools and their school districts. In *Board of Education School District No. 1 v. Booth*,[35] the Colorado Supreme Court upheld the appeal provision of the Colorado Charter Schools Act. Denver Public Schools had challenged the appeal procedure arguing that it violated local control of education as guaranteed in the Colorado Constitution.

As of December 31, 2001, the State Board of Education had disposed of 96 appeals under the Colorado Charter Schools Act. Table 2 shows the nature of these various proceedings and their resolution over time.

Table 2: Disposition of Charter School Appeals by State Board of Education

Resolution	Inception – 12/31/96	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Total Inception-12/31/01
Upheld local board decision on first appeal	21		2	4	5	3	36
Remanded decision back to local board of education for reconsideration	13	2	3	2	1	3	24
Ordered the establishment of a charter school after the second appeal of a local board's decision	1		1		1	1	4
Overturned a local board's decision to revoke a charter	1						1
Dismissed the appeal because the parties settled the issues in dispute	1			4			5
Dismissed the appeal because of legal defects in the appeal	12	1		5	4	4	26
Total	50	3	6	15	11	11	96

In August 2001, the Colorado Supreme Court released its decision in the case of *Academy of Charter Schools v. Adams County School District No. 12.* This decision resolved questions related to final dispute resolution between charter schools and their authorizing district. Specifically, the decision clarified the ability of charter schools to enforce specific aspects of their contracts with authorizing district in court. The decision distinguished between two types of contract disputes – those involving "service agreements" and those involving "governing policy agreements." Service agreements are voluntary contractual provisions entered pursuant to Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-104, and are subject to judicial enforcement. The balance of the charter contract between the charter school and the authorizing district, containing those contractual elements required by law, are "governing policy agreements." The State Board has complete statutory authority to hear disputes arising from implementation of governing policy provisions of the contract.

PART FOUR
CHARACTERISTICS OF COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOLS

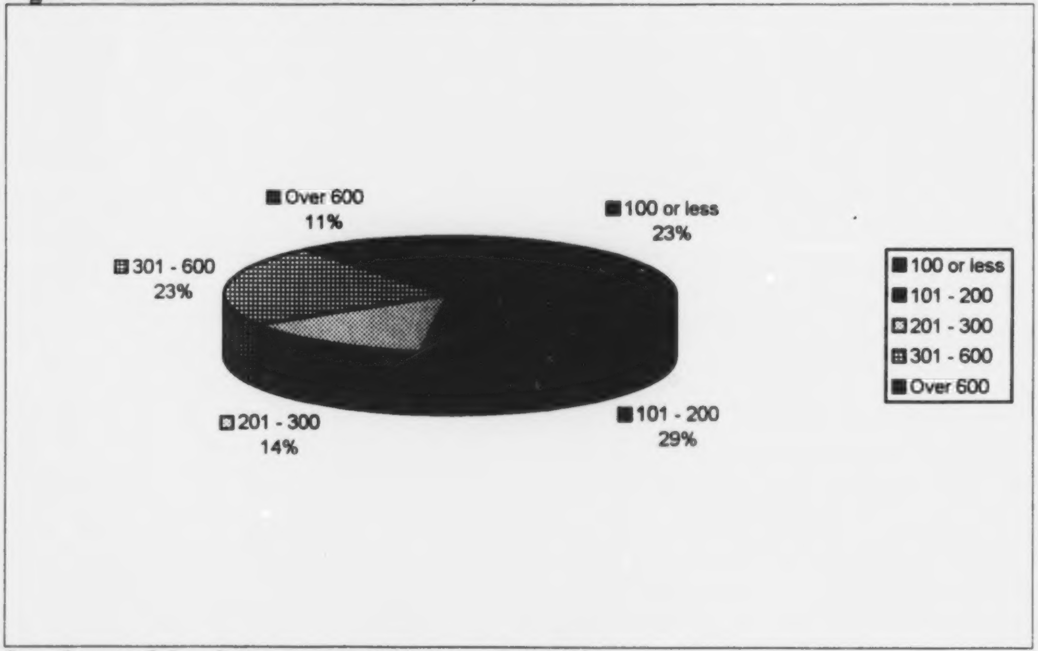
This section of the report looks at some key characteristics of Colorado charter schools and the students and families they served, in the context of state, national and longitudinal data. These data present an overall picture of the charter school program in Colorado during the 2000-01 school year.

Charter School Size

The charter schools included in this study ranged widely in size, depending on their location, the grade levels served and educational philosophy.

Of the 77 schools in this report:
- 23% (18 schools) served under 100 students,
- 29% (22 schools) served between 101 and 200 students,
- 14% (11 schools) served between 201 and 300 students,
- 23% (18 schools) served between 301 and 600 students, and
- 11% (8 schools) served over 600 students.

Figure 2 - Enrollment of Charter Schools, 2000-01



Data Source: Colorado Department of Education, Fall 2000.

Of the charter schools in this study, 52% enrolled 200 students or less, and only 11% enrolled over 600 students. The number of students enrolled by the charter schools ranged from 830 in the

The Classical Academy (Academy 20 School District) to 17 students in West End Charter Learning Center-Alternative School (West End School District RE-2). The average enrollment was 262 students. The median enrollment was 196 students.

POINTS OF REFERENCE

State of Colorado

In the fall of 2000, approximately 24% of all Colorado public schools served less than 200 students and approximately 23% served over 600 students.

National Charter Schools

The most recent national data available on charter school size are from the 1998-99 school year. The *State of Charter Schools 2000 – Fourth-Year Report* reported that:

- Charter schools tend to enroll, on average, fewer students than all public schools. During the 1998-99 school year, the median number of students in charter schools was 147, compared to a median of 475 in all public schools.
- In 1998-1999 more than three times as many charter schools as compared to other public schools enrolled fewer than 200 students (65% and 17% respectively).
- Only 8% of charter schools enrolled more than 600 students, as opposed to 35% of all public schools. Only 1% of charter schools enrolled more than 1,100 students, as compared to 11% for all public schools.[36]

Trend Data

The average enrollment of Colorado charter schools grew from 188 in the fall of 1996 to 262 in the fall of 2001, an increase of about 40 percent over the five-year period. Twenty-four charter schools were included in the 1996 evaluation study; the current study includes 77 charter schools.

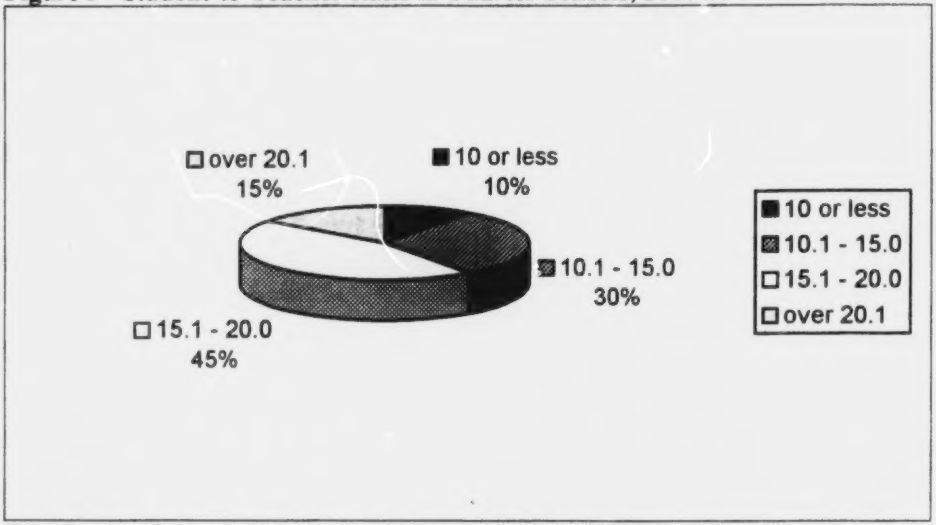
Student-to-Teacher Ratio

The Colorado Department of Education defines the selected pupil-to-teacher ratio as the ratio of all staff members assigned to professional activities or instructing students in self-contained classrooms or courses. The CDE count therefore includes not only classroom teachers, but also special education teachers and special subject teachers, including music, art, physical education and driver education.

Data related to the 2000-01 student-to-teacher ratio was available for 71 of the 77 charter schools operating during that year. Of the 17 charter schools for which data were available:

- 10% (7 schools) had a student-teacher ratio of 10.0 or less,
- 30% (21 schools) had a student-teacher ratio of 10.1 to 15.0,
- 45% (32 schools) had a student-teacher ratio of 15.1 to 20.0, and
- 15% (11 schools) had a student-teacher ratio over 20.1.

Figure 3 - Student-to-Teacher Ratio in Charter Schools, 2000-01



Data Source: Colorado Department of Education, Fall 2000.

The average student-to-teacher ratio in Colorado charter schools in 2000-01 was 14.25 to 1. Charter school student-to-teacher ratios ranged from a low of 7.6 to 1, to a high of 31.0 to 1. The median student-to-teacher ratio of charter schools in 2000-01 was 13.8 to 1.

POINTS OF REFERENCE

State of Colorado

In the fall of 2000-01, Colorado's student-to-teacher ratio was 21.2.

National Charter Schools

In 1998-99, the most recent year for which national data is available, most charter schools had a slightly lower student-to-teacher ratio than did all public schools in the 27 charter states. The median student-to-teacher ratio was 16.0 for charter schools compared to 17.2 for all public schools.[37]

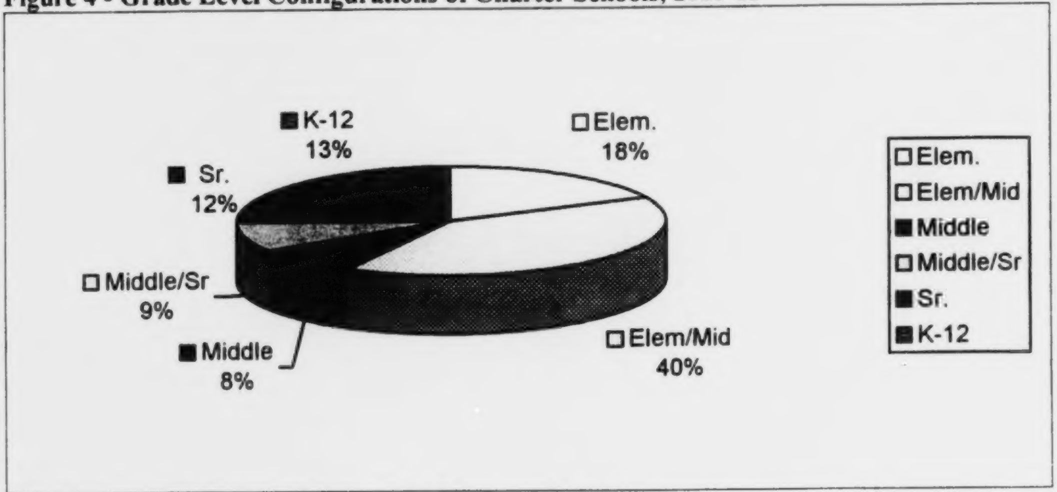
Grade Level Configuration

Less than forty percent of the charter schools in this report (29 schools or 38%) fit the traditional grade-level configuration of elementary, middle or high schools. Most of the charter schools offered a program that served students continuously from elementary through middle school, or from middle school through secondary school, or throughout their public school experience.

2000-01 data on grade levels was available for all 77 schools included in this report. Of these:

- 18% (14 schools) were elementary schools[38],
- 40% (31 schools) were K-7 or K- 8 schools,
- 8% (6 schools) were middle schools or junior high schools,
- 9% (7 schools) were middle/high schools,
- 12% (9 schools) were high schools, and
- 13% (10 schools) were K - 12 schools.

Figure 4 - Grade Level Configurations of Charter Schools, 2000-01



Data Source: Colorado Department of Education, Fall 2000

POINTS OF REFERENCE

State of Colorado

Charter schools were much more likely than other public schools in Colorado to combine elementary and middle school grade levels, middle and secondary school grades levels, and to offer an educational program that serves students in grades K-12. In Colorado, only about 15% of public schools did not fit the traditional grade-level configuration of elementary, middle or secondary schools. In contrast, 60% of the charter schools in the report offered programs that fell outside of traditional grade-level configurations.

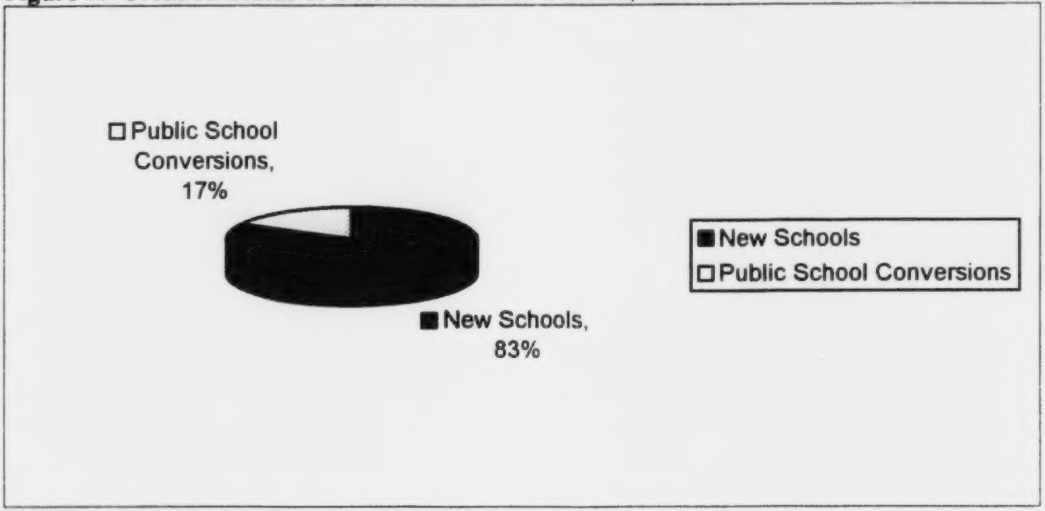
National Charter Schools

In 1998-99, the most recent data available, about one-half (52%) of all charter schools were structured according to a traditional grade level configuration of elementary, middle, or high school as compared to more than three-fourths (78%) of all public schools in the 27 charter states (in 1997-98).

Creation Status of Charter Schools

Sixty-four of the 77 schools (83%) operating in 2000-01 were new schools created through operation of the Colorado Charter Schools Act. The remaining thirteen schools (17%) were converted public schools. Colorado law does not allow the conversion of private schools into charter schools.

Figure 5: Creation Status of Colorado Charter Schools, 2000-01



Data Source: Colorado Department of Education

POINTS OF REFERENCE

National Charter Schools

On a national level, approximately 72% of all charter schools are newly created schools, 18% are pre-existing public schools and 10% are pre-existing private schools.[39]

Educational Program

During the 2000-01 school year, 46 of the 77 charter schools (60%) used a recognized national reform model as the foundation of their educational program. These reform models included:

Core Knowledge - 29 schools:

- Academy Charter School (Douglas County School District)
- Academy of Charter Schools (Adams 12 Five Star School District)
- Alta Vista Charter School (Lamar School District)
- Aurora Academy (Adams-Arapahoe School District 28J)
- Brighton Charter School (Brighton School District)
- Cardinal Community Academy (Keenesburg School District)
- Cherry Creek Academy (Cherry Creek School District)
- Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy (Cheyenne Mountain School District)
- The Classical Academy (Academy School District 20)

- Collegiate Academy of Colorado (Jefferson County School District)
- Crown Pointe Academy (Westminster School District 50)
- Elbert County Charter School (Elizabeth School District)
- Excel Academy (Jefferson County School District)
- Frontier Academy (Greeley School District 6)
- Indian Peaks Charter School (East Grand School District)
- Jefferson Academy (Jefferson County School District)
- Liberty Common School (Poudre School District)
- Lincoln Academy (Jefferson County School District)
- Littleton Academy (Littleton School District),
- Littleton Preparatory Charter School (Littleton School District)
- Monument Charter Academy (Lewis Palmer School District)
- Mountain View Core Knowledge Charter School (Canon City School District)
- Parker Core Knowledge Charter School (Douglas County School District)
- Peak to Peak Charter School (Boulder Valley School District)
- Pinnacle Charter Academy (Adams 12 Five Star School District)
- Platte River Academy Charter School (Douglas County Charter School)
- Swallows Charter Academy (Pueblo School District 70)
- Twin Peaks Charter Academy (St. Vrain School District)
- Woodrow Wilson Charter Academy (Jefferson County School District)

The cohort of charter schools using the Core Knowledge reform model is notable both for its size (representing 38% of all schools in this report) and for its dominance as a reform model used by charter schools. Of the charter schools operating in 2000-01, 29 used the Core Knowledge reform model, compared to four schools for the reform model used by the second highest number of charter schools.

Core Knowledge is an approach to curriculum based on the work of E.D. Hirsch, Jr. The focus of the Core Knowledge approach is on teaching a common core of concepts, skills and knowledge that characterize a "culturally literate" and educated individual. Core Knowledge is based on the principle that the grasp of a specific and shared body of knowledge will help students establish strong foundations for higher levels of learning. Developed through research examining successful national and local core curricula and through consultation with education experts in each subject area, the *Core Knowledge Sequence* provides a consensus-based model of specific content guidelines for students in the elementary grades. It offers a progression of detailed grade-by-grade topics of knowledge in history, geography, mathematics, science, language arts, and fine arts, so that students build on knowledge from year to year in grades K-8. Instructional strategies are left to the discretion of teachers. The Core Knowledge sequence typically comprises 50% of schools' curriculum; the other 50% allow schools to meet state and local requirements and teachers to contribute personal strengths. Parent involvement and consensus building contribute to the success of the *Core Knowledge Sequence*.[40]

Montessori - four schools:

- Compass Montessori School (Jefferson County School District)
- Compass Montessori Secondary School (Jefferson County School District)
- DCS Montessori Charter School (Douglas County School District)
- Montessori Peaks Academy (Jefferson County School District)

Montessori is a comprehensive educational approach from birth through adolescence based on the observation of children's needs. It incorporates an understanding of children's national learning tendencies as they unfold in "prepared environments" for multi-age groups (0-3, 3-6, 3-9. 9-12 and 12-14). The Montessori environment contains specially designed manipulative "materials for development" that invite children to engage in learning activities of their own individual choice. Under the guidance of a trained teacher, children learn by making discoveries with the materials, thus cultivating concentration, motivation, self-discipline and love of learning. The curriculum is interdisciplinary and interactive. In a Montessori classroom, independent activity constitutes about 80% of the work while teacher-directed activity accounts for the remaining 20%. The special environments also offer practical occasions for development of social relationships through free interaction. The materials themselves invite activity and are self-correcting. The child solves problems independently, building self-confidence, analytical thinking and the satisfaction that comes from accomplishment. Parent involvement is encouraged through parent orientations, discussion groups, open houses, observations and publications.[41]

Expeditionary Learning – four schools:

- The Black Forest School (Academy School District 20)
- The Odyssey School (Denver Public Schools)
- Renaissance Charter School (Douglas County School District)
- Southwest Open High School (Montezuma-Cortez School District)

Expeditionary Learning is organized on the principles of Outward Bound. Curriculum, instruction, assessment, school culture and school structures are organized around producing high quality student work in learning expeditions- long term, in-depth investigations of themes or topics that engage students in the classroom and in the wider world through authentic projects, fieldwork and services.

These learning expeditions have clear learning goals that are aligned with district and state standards. Ongoing assessment is woven throughout each learning expedition, pushing students to higher levels of performance. Teachers work collaboratively in teams, with regular common planning time to plan interdisciplinary expeditions, review each other's expedition plans and reflect on student work and teacher practices to improve curriculum and instruction. To strengthen relationships in the classroom, students stay with the same teacher or team of teachers for more than one year. Teachers and school leaders participate in a sequence of professional development activities.[42]

The Edison Project – three schools:

- Emerson-Edison Junior Charter Academy (Colorado Springs District 11)
- Roosevelt Edison Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11)
- Wyatt-Edison Charter School (Denver Public Schools)

The Edison Project is a privately sponsored effort to create innovative schools that operate at current public school spending levels and that provide all students with an education that is rooted in democratic values, that is academically excellent and that prepares them for productive lives. The design in composed of ten integral parts:

1. Schools Organized for Every Student's Success: small schools within schools;
2. Better Use of Time: longer school day and year;
3. Rich and Challenging Curriculum: world-class standards; education in humanities and arts, mathematics and science, ethics and practical skills, health and fitness (Edison uses the

University of Chicago School Mathematics Program and the Success for All reading program).
4. Teaching Methods that Motivate: multiple instruction techniques;
5. Careful Assessment that Provides Real Accountability: tied to standards; multiple assessment tools;
6. A Professional Environment for Teachers : a portable computer for every teacher; extensive professional development;
7. Technology for an Information Age: a computer in every student's home; highly equipped schools;
8. New Partnership with Parents: regular communication between teachers and parents;
9. Schools Tailored to Your Community: curriculum tailored to meet local needs; and
10. Backed by a System That Serves: support, guidance and resources from the Edison national headquarters.[43]

Paideia - two schools:
- Community Prep Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11)
- Pueblo School for the Arts and Sciences (Pueblo District 60)

Paideia's purpose is to prepare each student for earning a living, being a citizen of this country and the world and pursuing life-long learning. The model is based on the work of Mortimer Adler. Paideia educators believe that high academic achievement is expected of all students and that it is society's duty to provide that opportunity. A fundamental value in this model is that universal, high quality education is essential to democracy. Instructional goals are based on acquisition of knowledge, development of intellectual skills, and enlarged understanding of ideas and values. These are addressed through three instructional approaches:
- didactic instruction: teacher lecturing which provides opportunities for "acquisition of knowledge";
- coaching: one-on-one instruction from the teacher, which takes place while students work independently at their own level and pace; and
- small group seminars: which usually use the Socratic method of questioning to explore issues in greater depth.

Schoolwide restructuring is necessary to fully implement all three instructional pieces, as Socratic seminars require longer class periods, while coaching may call for smaller classes enabling teachers to spend more time with individuals. The National Paideia Center advocates schools' using locally developed standards.[44]

Modern Red Schoolhouse – two schools:
- Ute Creek Secondary Academy (St. Vrain School District).
- Challenges, Choices and Images Charter School (Denver Public Schools)

Modern Red Schoolhouse (MRSh) works in partnership with schools to reinvent the virtues of the little red schoolhouse in a modern context. At an MRSh school, students master a rigorous curriculum, develop character and promote the principles of democratic government. These elements of the traditional red schoolhouse are then combined with innovative teaching methods and student groupings, flexibility in organizing instruction and deploying resources and advanced technology as a learning and instructional management tool. The core principle MRSh is that all students can and will reach high academic standards. Because students learn at different rates and in different ways, instructional methods and time spent on lessons vary. MRSh offers a standards-drive curriculum, traditional and performance-based assessments, effective organizational patterns and professional development programs, as well as effective community-involvement strategies. The primary tool for monitoring continuing progress is the Individual Education Compact, an agreement negotiated by the students, parents and teacher. This "educational road map" establishes measurable goals, details parent and teacher responsibility for helping the student achieve and lists services the school, parents or community should provide.[45]

The Coalition of Essential Schools - one school:
- The CONNECT Charter School (Pueblo School District 70)

Mosaic – one school:
- Denver Arts and Technology Academy (Denver Public Schools)

William Glasser's Quality School Network - one school:
- Horizons Alternative School (Boulder Valley School District)

The remainder of the schools included in this study offered educational programs that combined elements of various reform models and practices. While subsets of this remainder shared common practices and characteristics, they could not be grouped into identifiable categories for purposes of comparing the relative performance of different reform models.

Table 3 identifies some of the distinctive components of the educational approaches applied by Colorado charter schools and illustrates the diversity of these approaches. The determination of whether the educational programs offered by the charter schools are innovative, or more innovative than those offered in conventional public schools, is dependent upon context. Innovation is in the eye of the beholder. Routine instructional practices in some schools may be highly inventive in others. Moreover, the same reform strategy can be expressed very distinctly in different schools, depending on the school's culture and policy context and on the level of support for reform. In other words, innovation can be a product of the duration and intensity of educational practices as well as of their content.

Table 3: Overview of Distinctive Components of Educational Programs - Schools Opened Fall 1993, Fall 1994

Distinctive Components of Educational Program	Academy Charter School	Academy of Charter Schools	Battle Rock	Center for Discovery Learning	Colle-giate	Comm of Learners	CON-NECT	Parker Core Know-ledge	Eagle	The EXCL School	Jefferson Academy	PSAS	Stargate
Thematic/Interdisciplinary Instruction	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Technology as a major focus	X		X				X	X	X	X	X	X	
Core Knowledge curriculum	X	X			X			X			X		
Community as classroom			X	X		X			X	X		X	X
Individualized learning plans	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Multi-age groupings			X	X		X	X		X	X		X	X
Focus on specific subject matter (e.g. arts, science/math)				X	X							X	
Character development	X			X	X			X	X		X		X
Hands-on/Experiential learning	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X
Extended academic day/year			X	X	X				X			X	
Foreign language instruction at all grades	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X		X	X
Block or other non-traditional scheduling	X			X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X
Year-Round Calendar						X						X	
Community Service/Service Learning			X	X		X		X	X	X		X	X

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Table 3 (Cont.): Distinctive Components of Educational Programs - Schools Opened Fall 1995

Distinctive Components of Educational Program	**Aspen/ Carbondale**	**Cherry Creek Academy**	**Cheyenne Mountain**	**Community Prep**	**Crestone Charter**	**Excel Academy**	**GLOBE Charter**	**Marble Charter**	**P.S.1**	**Renaissance**
Thematic/Interdisciplinary Instruction	X			X	X		X	X	X	X
Technology as a major focus				X	X					X
Core Knowledge curriculum		X	X			X				
Community as classroom	X						X	X	X	
Individualized learning plans	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Multi-age groupings	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Focus on specific subject matter (e.g. arts, science/math)							X			
Character development	X	X					X		X	
Hands-on/Experiential learning	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Extended academic day/year		X								
Foreign language instruction at all grades	X						X			X
Block or other non-traditional scheduling							X		X	X
Year-Round Calendar						X			X	X
Community Service/Service Learning	X			X	X		X	X	X	

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Table 3 (Cont.): Distinctive Components of Educational Programs - Schools Opened Fall 1996

Distinctive Components of Educational Program	Lake George	Littleton Academy	Monument Charter Academy	Mt. View Core Know.	Roosevelt-Edison	Emerson-Edison Jr. Academy	Summit Middle School	Swallows Academy
Thematic/Interdisciplinary Instruction	X			X	X	X		
Technology as a major focus					X	X	X	
Core Knowledge curriculum		X	X	X				X
Community as classroom	X				X	X		
Individualized learning plans	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Multi-age groupings	X				X	X	X	
Focus on specific subject matter (e.g. arts, science/math)							X	
Character development		X		X	X	X		X
Hands-on/experiential learning	X			X	X	X		
Extended academic day/year					X	X		
Foreign language instruction at all grades		X gr 1-8		X	X	X	X	
Block or other non-traditional scheduling								
Year-Round Calendar								
Community Service/Service Learning								

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Table 3 (Cont.): Distinctive Components of Educational Programs - Schools Opened Fall 1997

Distinctive Components of Educational Program	Boulder Prep	CIVA Charter	Classical Academy	Crown Pointe	DCS Montessori	Elbert County	Frontier Academy	Horizons Alternative	Liberty Common School
Thematic/Interdisciplinary Instruction								X	
Technology as a major focus	X					X		X	
Core Knowledge curriculum			X	X		X	X		X
Community as classroom	X				X			X	
Individualized learning plans	X				X	X	X	X	X
Multi-age groupings	X	X			X	X		X	
Focus on specific subject matter (e.g. arts, science/math)		X							
Character development	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hands-on/Experiential learning	X	X	X		X			X	X
Extended academic day/year	X								X
Foreign language instruction at all grades			X	X	X	X		X	X
Block or other non-traditional scheduling	X				X			X	X
Year-Round Calendar	X								
Community Service/Service Learning	X	X				X	X	X	

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Table 3 (Cont.): Distinctive Components of Educational Programs - Schools Opened Fall 1997

Distinctive Components of Educational Program	Lincoln Academy	Montessori Peaks	Pinnacle	Pioneer	Platte River Academy	Prairie Creeks	Rocky Mt Deaf School	Twin Peaks	Union Colony	Youth/ Family Academy
Thematic/Interdisciplinary Instruction			X	X	X		X		X	
Technology as a major focus		X		X	X	X				
Core Knowledge curriculum	X		X		X			X		
Community as classroom										
Individualized learning plans		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Multi-age groupings		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Focus on specific subject matter (e.g. arts, science/math)				X			X			
Character development		X		X	X	X	X	X		X
Hands-on/Experiential learning		X			X		X			X
Extended academic day/year		X		X	X					
Foreign language instruction at all grades		X			X		X	X	X	
Block or other non-traditional scheduling			X		X	X	X		X	
Year-Round Calendar										
Community Service/Service Learning				X	X			X		

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Table 3 (Cont.): Distinctive Components of Educational Programs - Schools Opened Fall 1998

Distinctive Components of Educational Program	Alta Vista Charter	Brighton Charter	Colorado High School	Compass Montessori	Littleton Preparatory	The Odyssey School	Passage Charter School	Wyatt-Edison Charter
Thematic/Interdisciplinary Instruction				X		X	X	
Technology as a major focus		X						X
Core Knowledge curriculum	X	X			X			
Community as classroom				X		X	X	
Individualized learning plans	X			X	X		X	
Multi-age groupings	X	X		X		X		
Focus on specific subject matter (e.g. arts, science/math)		X		X			X	
Character development		X		X	X	X		X
Hands-on/experiential learning				X		X	X	
Extended academic day/year		X			X		X	X
Foreign language instruction at all grades								X
Block or other non-traditional scheduling		X		X	X		X	
Year-Round Calendar							X	
Community Service/Service Learning				X		X	X	

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Table 3 (Cont.): Distinctive Components of Educational Programs - Schools Opened Fall 1999 and Fall 2000

Distinctive Components of Educational Program	**Aurora Academy**	**Black Forest School**	**Cardinal Comm. Academy**	**Challenges Choices & Images**	**Comm. Challenge**	**DATA Academy**	**Guffey Comm School**	**Indian Peaks**	**James Irwin High School**
Thematic/Interdisciplinary Instruction		X	X	X	X		X		X
Technology as a major focus						X			
Core Knowledge curriculum	X		X			X		X	
Community as classroom							X		
Individualized learning plans		X			X		X		
Multi-age groupings		X	X	X	X		X		
Focus on specific subject matter (e.g. arts, science/math)					X				
Character development		X	X	X	X			X	X
Hands-on/Experiential learning		X		X	X		X		
Extended academic day/year				X	X	X			
Foreign language instruction at all grades								X	X
Block or other non-traditional scheduling				X	X				
Year-Round Calendar					X				
Community Service/Service Learning					X			X	

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Table 3 (Cont.): Distinctive Components of Educational Programs - Schools Opened Fall 1999 and Fall 2000

Distinctive Components of Educational Program	Paradox Valley	Peak to Peak Charter	Sojournor Charter	Southwest Open Charter	Tutmose Academy	UNC Lab School	Ute Creek Secondary	West End Learning Center	Woodrow Wilson Charter
Thematic/Interdisciplinary Instruction	X		X	X		X			
Technology as a major focus									
Core Knowledge curriculum		X							X
Community as classroom	X		X	X	X				
Individualized learning plans	X	X			X				
Multi-age groupings	X	X		X	X	X			
Focus on specific subject matter (e.g. arts, science/math)								X	
Character development		X			X				X
Hands-on/Experiential learning	X		X	X	X				
Extended academic day/year	X								
Foreign language instruction at all grades									
Block or other non-traditional scheduling					X				
Year-Round Calendar									
Community Service/Service Learning	X				X	X			

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Assessment Tools Used by Charter Schools

As public schools, all charter schools were required to administer the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) in the appropriate content areas and grades. During the 2000-01 school year, CSAP tests were administered in Reading at grades 3 - 10, in Writing at grades 4, 7 and 10, and in Mathematics in grades 5, 8 and 10. The CSAP is a standards-based assessment, aligned with the state model content standards.

To supplement the CSAP, the charter schools used a variety of assessments, depending on the school's educational approach and performance goals and the requirements of the chartering district. Assessment experts agree that an assessment program should use an array of tests to measure different dimensions of student learning. No single test can provide a full picture of a student's progress or learning. In this regard, note that charter schools also used teacher-produced and curriculum-based assessments regularly in the classroom, in addition to the more formal assessments discussed here.

Table 4 provides an overview of the assessment tools in addition to the CSAP used by charter schools during the 2000-01 school year, organized into three broad categories:

- **Norm-referenced tests** are tests that measure the relative performance of the individual or group by comparison with the performance of other individuals or groups taking the same test. The norm-referenced test used by the most schools in this report was the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), followed by Terra Nova.

- **Criterion-referenced tests** are tests whose scores are interpreted by reference to well-defined domains of content or behaviors, rather than by reference to the performance of some other group.

- **Performance assessments** are tests that measure ability by assessing open-ended responses or by asking the respondent to complete a task, produce a response or demonstrate a skill.

Of the 77 charter schools operating in 2000-01:

- 87% (67 schools) administered norm-referenced tests,
- 64% (49 schools) administered criterion-referenced tests.
- 68% (52 schools) administered performance assessments.

90% of the charter schools reported using more than one assessment in addition to the CSAP. Almost all charter schools administered parent surveys and tracked behavior indicators (student suspension and expulsion rates), as well. These measures are discussed in Part 8 of this report.

POINTS OF REFERENCE

National Charter Schools

In 1998-99, nearly every charter school used standardized assessments of student achievement (96%), though a higher percentage of charter schools used norm-referenced assessments (86%) than criterion-referenced assessments (62%). The majority of charter schools also used nonstandardized assessments. Charter schools measured student achievement through student demonstration of their work, student portfolios, and performance assessments. Charter schools also used parent surveys and behavior indicators to measure progress toward other school goals.[46]

Table 4: Overview of District/School Assessments Used by Charter Schools that Opened Fall 1993 or 1994

Assessment Tools Used to Measure Student Achievement	**Academy Charter School**	**Acdmy of Charter**	**Battle Rock**	**Center Disc. Learning**	**Collegi-ate**	**Comm of Learners**	**CON-NECT**	**Core Know-ledge**	**Eagle**	**EXCEL School**	**Jeffer-son Acdmy**	**PSAS**	**Stargate**
Norm-Referenced Assessments													
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)		X	X		X	X					X		
California Achievement Test (CAT)													
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills													
Degrees of Reading Power Test (DRP)													
Developmental Reading Assess. (DRA)				X									X
Nelson-Denney Reading Test												X	
Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI)				X									
STAR Math and Reading Assessments		X	X	X							X		
Terra Nova	X	X		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	
Test of Adult Basic Education													
Tests of Achievement & Proficiency													
Criterion-Referenced Assessments													
Stanford Achievement Test				X									X
Stanford Writing/Reading Assessment						X							X
District Assessments		X	X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X
Woodcock Johnson		X		X	X				X	X	X		X
Performance Assessments													
Individual Learning Programs			X	X		X			X	X	X		X
Portfolios			X	X		X	X		X		X		X
Student Exhibitions			X	X			X		X		X		
Other							Exit Exam						

Table 4 (Cont.): Overview of District/School Assessments Used by Charter Schools that Opened Fall 1995

Assessment Tools Used to Measure Student Achievement	Aspen Carbondale	Cherry Creek Academy	Cheyenne Mountain	Comm. Prep	Crestone	Excel Academy	GLOBE	Marble	P.S.1	Renaissance
Norm-Referenced Tests										
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)		X	X				X			
California Achievement Test (CAT)										
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS)										
Degrees of Reading Power Test (DRP)									X	
Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)						X		X		X
Nelson-Denney Reading Test										
Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI)	X					X	X	X		
STAR Math/Reading Assessments			X					X		X
Terra Nova						X				
Test of Adult Basic Education				X						
Tests of Achievement & Proficiency (TAP)				X			X			
Criterion-Referenced Tests										
Stanford Achievement Test					X					
Stanford Reading/Writing Assessment										
District Assessments		X			X	X	X	X	X	X
Woodcock Johnson			X			X			X	X
Performance Assessments										
Individual Learning Programs	X				X	X	X	X	X	X
Portfolios	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Student Exhibitions	X			X	X			X	X	X
Other	6-Trait	Cogat				6-Trait		NWEA	6-Trait ACT	6-Trait Durrell Reading

Table 4 (Cont.): Overview of District/School Assessments Used by Charter Schools that Opened Fall 1996

Assessment Tools Used to Measure Student Achievement	**Lake George**	**Littleton Academy**	**Monument Charter School**	**Mountain View Core Knowledge**	**Roosevelt -Edison/**	**Emerson -Edison**	**Summit Middle School**	**Swallows Academy**
Norm-Referenced Tests								
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)		X		X	X	X		
California Achievement Test (CAT)								
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS)				X			X	
Degrees of Reading Power Test (DRP)								
Developmental Reading Assess. (DRA)								
Nelson-Denney Reading Test								
Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI)	X	X					X	
STAR Math/Reading Assessments			X					X
Terra Nova	X						X	
Test of Adult Basic Education								
Tests of Achievement & Proficiency (TAP)								
Criterion-Referenced Tests								
Stanford Achievement Test								X
Stanford Writing/Reading Assessment							X	
District Content Standards/Curriculum Assessment					X			
Woodcock Johnson	X		X		X			
Performance Assessments								
Individual Learning Programs	X		X		X	X		
Portfolios			X			X		
Student Exhibitions			X			X		
Other								BRI

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Table 4 (Cont.): Overview of District/School Assessments Used by Charter Schools that Opened Fall 1997

Assessment Tools Used to Measure Student Achievement	**Boulder Prep**	**CIVA Charter**	**Classical Academy**	**Crown Pointe Academy**	**DCS Montessori**	**Elbert County**	**Frontier Academy**	**Horizons**	**Liberty Common School**
Norm-Referenced Tests									
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)			X			X	X		
California Achievement Test (CAT)								X	
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS)				X					
Degrees of Reading Power Test (DRP)									X
Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)							X		
Nelson-Denney Reading Test									
Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI)						X	X		
STAR Math/Reading Assessments				X					X
Terra Nova			X	X					
Test of Adult Basic Education									
Tests of Achievement & Proficiency (TAP)		X							
Criterion-Referenced Tests									
Stanford Achievement Test									
Stanford Diagnostic Reading Assessment									
District Content Standards/Curriculum Assessment									
Woodcock Johnson	X								X
Performance Assessments									
Individual Learning Programs		X				X		X	X
Portfolios		X		X				X	
Student Exhibition		X						X	
Other	WRAT								Core Knowledge

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Table 4 (Cont.): Overview of District/School Assessments Used by Charter Schools that Opened Fall 1997

Assessment Tools Used to Measure Student Achievement	Lincoln Academy	Montessori Peaks	Pinnacle	Pioneer	Platte River Academy	Prairie Creeks	Rocky Mt. Deaf School	Twin Peaks	Union Colony	Youth & Family Academy
Norm-Referenced Tests										
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)				X			X			
California Achievement Test (CAT)										
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS)								X		
DALT										
Degrees of Reading Power Test (DRP)										
Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)	X	X			X		X			
Nelson-Denney Reading Test										
Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI)			X		X		X			
STAR Math/Reading Assessments					X					
Terra Nova	X	X					X	X		X
Test of Adult Basic Education										
Tests of Achievement & Proficiency (TAP)										
Criterion-Referenced Tests										
Stanford Achievement Test										
Stanford Reading/Writing Assessment										
District Assessments		X	X	X	X				X	
Woodcock Johnson	X	X						X	X	
Performance Assessments										
Individual Learning Programs	X	X	X	X						
Portfolios		X					X			
Student Exhibitions		X							Seniors	
Other	Core Know.				Core Know.	PSAT		Core Know.	Explore, PLAN, PSAT	

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Table 4 (Cont.): Overview of District/School Assessments Used by Charter Schools that Opened Fall 1998

Assessment Tools Used to Measure Student Achievement	Alta Vista Charter	Brighton Charter	Colorado High School	Compass Montessori	Littleton Preparatory Charter	The Odyssey School	Passage Charter	Wyatt-Edison Charter
Norm-Referenced Tests								
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)	X	X			X	X		X
California Achievement Test (CAT)								
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS)								
Degrees of Reading Power Test (DRP)								
Developmental Reading Assessment (DAR)				X		X		
Nelson-Denney Reading Test								
Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI)				X		X		
STAR Math/Reading Assessments	X	X						
Terra Nova		X		X				
Test of Adult Basic Education							X	
Tests of Achievement & Proficiency (TAP)								
Criterion-Referenced Tests								
Stanford Achievement Test		X	X					
Stanford Reading/Writing Assessment								
District Assessment				X		X		
Woodcock Johnson	X			X				X
Performance Assessments								
Individual Learning Programs				X	X	X		X
Portfolios				X		X	X	X
Student Exhibitions			X	X		X		
Other								Edison Benchmarks

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Table 4 (Cont.): Overview of District/School Assessments Used by Charter Schools that Opened Fall 1999 and Fall 2000

Assessment Tools Used to Measure Student Achievement	Aurora Academy	Black Forest	Cardinal Comm. Academy	Challenges Choices & Images	Comm. Challenge Charter	DATA	Guffey Comm. School	Indian Peaks	James Irwin Charter High
Norm-Referenced Tests									
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)	X	X	X		X	X			X (ITED)
California Achievement Test (CAT)				X					
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS)									
Degrees of Reading Power Test (DRP)									
Developmental Reading Assessment (DAR)									
Nelson-Denney Reading Test									
Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI)							X		
STAR Math/Reading Assessments	X (R)	X							
Terra Nova			X					X	
Test of Adult Basic Education									
Tests of Achievement & Proficiency (TAP)									
Criterion-Referenced Assessments									
Stanford Achievement Test									
Stanford Reading/Writing Assessment							X		
District Assessment				X					
Woodcock Johnson	X			X	X	X			
Performance Assessments									
Individual Learning Programs			X	X	X		X		
Portfolios		X	X		X	X	X		
Student Exhibitions		X	X		X	X	X		
Other		CoGat			6-Traits Youth Inventory	Durrell Reading Analysis	Slossen Math		

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Table 4 (Cont.): Overview of District/School Assessments Used by Charter Schools that Opened Fall 1999 and Fall 2000

Assessment Tools Used to Measure Student Achievement	Paradox Valley	Peak to Peak	Sojourner	Southwest Open School	Tutmose Academy	UNC Lab School	Ute Creek Secondary	West End Learning Center	Woodrow Wilson Charter
Norm-Referenced Tests									
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)									
California Achievement Test (CAT)									
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS)			X						
Degrees of Reading Power Test (DRP)									
Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)									X
Nelson-Denney Reading Test									
Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI)			X						X
STAR Math/Reading Assessments									
Terra Nova	X	X					X	X	X
Test of Adult Basic Education				X					
Tests of Achievement & Proficiency (TAP)									
Criterion-Referenced Tests									
Stanford Achievement Test									
Stanford Reading/Writing Assessment			X						
District Assessments					X				
Woodcock Johnson		X	X	X	X		X		
Performance Assessments									
Individual Learning Programs		X	X		X		X	X	
Portfolios	X		X	X	X	X		X	
Student Exhibitions	X		X	X	X	X			
Other					BRI	ACT-PLAN			

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The Delivery of Special Education Services in Charter Schools

As public schools, charter schools must open their enrollment to any student who lives within the authorizing school district, and must provide appropriate services as needed by students with disabilities. Charter schools are not required to make alterations in the structure of their facility, except as may be required by state or federal law.[47]

Whether delivering special education themselves or working with their authorizing district, charter schools must abide by all federal and state regulations regarding special education (e.g. the development of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), service delivery in the least restrictive environment and teacher certification requirements). In practice, federal regulations that govern special education are particularly challenging for many charter schools.

Two recent reports -- one conducted by a national organization involving 11 Colorado charter schools, and one conducted under contract to the CDE that engaged over half of the Colorado charter schools -- shed light on how charter schools and their chartering district are implementing federal and state laws that govern the education of children with disabilities.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES IN COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOLS: SURVEYING PERCEPTIONS OF CHARTER SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTORS

The Colorado Department of Education contracted with Dr. Debora L. Scheffel of the University of Northern Colorado to explore special education services in Colorado charter schools and the relationship between charter schools and their authorizing districts in relation to special education. The study had three purposes. The first purpose was to determine how charter schools in Colorado reportedly fund delivery of special education services to their students. The second was to determine attitudes and perceptions of charter school administrators and district special education directors about charter school services for students with special education needs. The third was to create a data-based foundation for making recommendations for improving the delivery of services by charter schools to students with special education needs.

The study, which began in January 2001, had two parts. Dr. Scheffel developed and sent a written survey to all charter school principals. A second survey was sent to directors of special education in districts that have authorized charter schools. Approximately 52% of the administrators and 65% of the special education directors completed and returned the surveys. In addition, Dr. Sheffel conducted focus groups in two locations in Colorado, one at each site for charter school principals and a second at each site for special education directors. Letters requesting participation in the focus groups were sent to all charter school principals and all directors of special education in the state of Colorado. Focus groups were comprised of from five to nine participants.

The text of the full study is available from the CDE website (www.cde.state.co.us). Major findings of the study include:

- Charter schools are serving an increasing number and percentage of students with an individualized education program, causing an increasing strain on both the charter schools and the chartering districts' capacity to support charter schools in meeting the needs of these students. Projections suggest that this trend will continue, highlighting the importance of addressing issues which impede a collaborative relationship between charter schools and school districts.

- One-third of charter school administrators recognized that their schools are not attractive to parents of children with disabilities. Charter school administrators also indicated limited plans to offer additional services to students with disabilities, likely because of cost issues. Most charter schools did not have a specific plan in their charter application to comply with laws related to educating students with disabilities. Since most charters prefer serving students with special education needs in the regular classroom to other service delivery options, it is likely that the lack of planning and the lack of options as to service delivery affect the extent to which charter schools are able to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

- Most Colorado charter schools use an insurance model to fund special education services to student with disabilities. Under this model, schools pay a flat per pupil rate to the district and the district provides needed services to students with disabilities. Other charter schools combine an insurance model with contracting out for some services with third-party providers. A majority of charter school principals report feeling a lack of control or only minimal control regarding the hiring special services providers in their schools. The majority also expressed general dissatisfaction with the financial arrangement they have with their school districts to fund special education services. In contrast, most special education directors are satisfied with the financial arrangements they have with their charter schools.

- In spite of their overall satisfaction with the arrangement to fund special education services for students in charter schools, special education directors believe that about one-quarter of the charter schools are partially or totally inadequate when it comes to serving the needs of students with disabilities.

- About 70% of special education directors report a supportive, positive relationship between their district and the charter schools within them, while only 10% of the charter school administrators report a positive relationship. This discrepancy indicates a major lack of awareness between the charter schools and their districts about the other's perspective.

- Charter school principals and special education directors share the impression that charter school personnel do not understand their legal responsibilities to students with disabilities and both parties would like to ameliorate this lack of knowledge.

The study made the following recommendations based on the data analysis:

- Improve communication between charter schools and their districts,
- Require charter schools to submit a detailed plan for serving the needs of students with disabilities as part of their charter application,
- Increase the availability of support materials for charter schools related to legal compliance.
- Clarify funding issues for charter schools to avoid conflicts with school districts, and
- Expand the role of the Colorado Department of Education in providing technical assistance to charter schools regarding legal compliance and provision of services to students in special education.

PROJECT SEARCH: COLORADO CASE STUDY

The National Association of State Directors of Special Education developed Project SEARCH to examine how state level policies and practices influence individual charter schools' capacity to deliver special education. As part of Project SEARCH, a research team led by Lauren Morando Rhim at the University of Maryland conducted an in-depth case study of special education policies and practices in Colorado between January 1999 and September 2000. The case study consisted of state, district, and school-level interviews, focus groups, documents, and visits to 11 charter schools selected based upon their geographic, demographic and programmatic diversity. The final report, issued in April 2001, is available at: www.nasdese.org/project_search.htm. An executive summary of the Colorado Case Study is available on the CDE website at www.cde.state.co.us.

Major findings of the Project SEARCH/Colorado Case Study were:

- The language in the law dictates that local districts retain ultimate authority for special education in charter schools. However, the delivery of special education is one of numerous issues that are "negotiated" between the district and the charter school.

- In Colorado, charter school applicants submit a formal application for a charter and then negotiate a contract that further stipulates the specifics of their relationship with the authorizing school district. Charter applications generally were characterized as inadequate and vague in terms of how they address special education. District representatives and charter operators cited technical assistance and an open dialogue during the application and contract process as central to the charter schools' ability to develop special education programs.

- Across the districts included in the case study, charter operators and district representatives reported diverse gradations of cooperation and support.

- In 1999, the Colorado General Assembly amended the Colorado Charter Schools Act to mandate that districts fund charter schools at no less than 95% of per pupil revenues. This new funding provision reportedly exacerbated, if only temporarily, the tension between charter schools and their authorizing districts. District staff projects that the funding adjustment will trigger a shift in how districts deliver services to charter schools. Specifically, district respondents in multiple districts explained that once they start to forward more funds directly through to the charter schools, they are going to monitor the services they provide to charters more closely and charge charters for services that were previously "free." District representatives reported that it is challenging to meet the demands of charter schools while simultaneously meeting the demands of traditional public schools that serve a far greater percentage of the total district population.

- Districts in Colorado are increasingly requiring that charter schools participate in an insurance model for special education. The insurance model essentially applies a standardized measure to all students who enroll in a charter school for the explicit purpose of insuring against the cost of special education for a specific population of students. The cost of the insurance model varies by district but is typically in the $300-$500/student range. District staff attributes the popularity of the insurance model to the fact that the district is responsible for providing a "free appropriate education" under IDEA and many districts are not willing to delegate that responsibility to charter schools. The two major points of conflict identified by charter operators were whether participation in the insurance model was voluntary and the rate charged to participate. In districts that use the insurance model, the district provides special education teachers and related services professionals to the charter schools. In cases where the district is hiring staff to work in charter schools on a full-time basis, the relationship appears most amicable when the charter school is involved in the hiring process.

- Of the 11 charter schools visited for this study, five reported that they operate a full-inclusion model and the remaining six reported that they provide some special education services on a pullout basis. Nearly all of the charter schools that described their special education model as "full-inclusion" appear to be offering a somewhat generic as opposed to an individualized program. District administrators expressed concern about the perception on the part of charter operators and some parents that "individualized learning" (typically represented by small classrooms or self-driven work) addresses special education needs.

- Discussions with state, district and school-level personnel revealed that concerns about charter schools "counseling-out" students with disabilities reflected a gray area between discrimination and determining the best educational program for a particular child with a disability. In general, charter schools are struggling to balance their individual mission with the rules and regulations stipulated by IDEA and specifically the accommodations that may be necessary to educate individual children with disabilities.

- When the state conducts special education audits, charter schools participate in the same way as other public schools.

- There is significant variability by district in terms of availability of special education staff. Districts that are more rural are struggling to hire and retain certificate special educators as well as general educators. Hiring and retention issues are influenced by the fact that charters, due to their small size, typically only hire one special educator. Special education teachers who participated in a focus group lamented that they are sometimes isolated in their schools because they do not have a cohort of peers with whom to share special education teaching experiences and issues.

- The primary source of technical assistance for charter schools on a wide array of issues is their sponsoring school district. The CDE has two staff members who are primarily responsible for charter school issues. Study participants generally complimented the CDE and describe the department as "charter friendly."

- Charter schools generally do not provide transportation, even to children with IEPs that require transportation as a related service. Charter operators (and representatives of multiple districts) participating in the case study justified this practice with the argument that choice enables a charter school to limit its services.

- Charter schools in Colorado offer a wide array of academic models. Charter operators struggle to balance the degree to which they must modify their curriculum to serve children with disabilities while honoring their larger mission, goals and objectives.

- Charter operators perceive that parents frequently shop around for a different or better option for their children with disabilities and may select a charter school because it is different rather than because it necessarily meets the children's needs. The fact that certain charter schools in Colorado are attracting disproportionate number of children with mild disabilities appears to support charter operators' perceptions.

- Based upon a cross-state analysis of eight states, the study identified the following key issues affecting Colorado charter schools' capacity to deliver special education services:

  - Districts and charter schools must negotiate to determine how to deliver special education in charter schools. There are inherent tensions underlying the negotiations stemming from district's legal obligations under IDEA and the charter schools' desire for autonomy.

  - The application process is the key opportunity for districts and charter schools to address the innumerable details associated with their relationship.

  - Technical assistance is central to charter schools developing the capacity to deliver special education.

  - Charter school finance and especially special education finance is an ongoing challenge.

CDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE EFFORTS

Because of concerns that charter school developers, boards of directors and administrators may not fully understand the charter schools' obligations under the IDEA and state special education laws, the CDE has undertaken a number of activities to provide assistance in this arena:

- In 2001, CDE offered two training opportunities on special education issues – a one-day workshop and a one-day conference sponsored by the Colorado League of Charter Schools.

- CDE convened the Charter Schools Special Education Advisory Committee to provide input regarding training, resource development and technical assistance needs. At its initial meeting in October, 2001, the Committee identified the following technical assistance needs:

  - A special education checklist for charter developers and local boards of education to use during negotiations.

  - A special education guide for charter schools. The purpose of the guide would be to provide basic information regarding (1) legal requirements under the IDEA and the ECEA and (2) identify best practices for assuring compliance with legal requirements.

  - Access by charter school developers to district special education directors in order to understand how special education services work in their specific school district.

  - Access by charter school administrators, staff and board of directors to special education training and materials.

- Training for special education directors about charter school issues.

- Training for charter developers, administrators and board members around special education funding requirements.

PART FIVE

CHARACTERISTICS OF COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS

The charter schools operating in 2000-01, as a cohort group, were significantly more racially and economically diverse than in prior years, but continued to serve a smaller percentage of racial/ethnic minority students and students eligible for free/reduced-price lunch[48] than the state public school average.

Table 5 shows the percentages of racial/ethnic minority students and free/reduced-price lunch-eligible students served by each charter school in 2000-01. The table also includes the percentages served by their authorizing district to provide one benchmark for comparison. These data provide a reasonable basis for broadly assessing the diversity of students in Colorado charter schools compared to other public schools, but they have limitations and should be read with some caution.

- The total number of charter school students in this report was small compared to the 2000-01 student enrollment in all public schools (representing approximately 2.8% of the total student population). The percentages among categories could therefore change significantly with only slight alterations in the composition of student enrollment.

- A pattern of racial concentration in a particular school might have resulted from the school's location and does not necessarily suggest a deliberate policy of exclusion. The location of charter schools depended on the willingness of communities and school districts to welcome, or at least support, charter schools in the first few years of their development. None of the schools in this report applied an admissions process that excluded certain populations of students in a discriminatory manner.

- The free/reduced-price lunch data is under-reported. At least some of the charter schools that do not offer a formal lunch program to their students do not collect and report data to CDE on the percentage of students eligible for free/reduced-price lunch. For these schools, the CDE database shows "0%" even though these schools may have served students from families who would have met eligibility requirements for the program.

Racial/Ethnic Minority Students

The 77 charter schools operating in 2000-01 served 5,310 racial/ethnic minority students, representing 26.3% of the schools' total enrollment (20,155). The state average was 31.8%.

The percentage of racial/ethnic minority students enrolled in charter schools increased by more than 40% over the last several years (up from 18.6% in the fall of 1997). However, the state level benchmark also increased over the same period (up from 28.6% in the fall of 1997).

The percentage of racial/ethnic minority students served by individual charter schools in 2000-01 ranged from 0% to 98.6%.

80

Of the 77 charter schools operating in 2000-01,

- 14% (11 schools) served a percentage of racial/ethnic minority students that was within ten percent (plus or minus) of their authorizing district's average percentage of racial/ethnic minority students,
- 61% (47 schools) served a lower percentage (more than a 10% difference) of racial/ethnic minority students than their authorizing district, and
- 25% (19 schools) served a higher percentage (more than 10%) of racial/ethnic minority students than their authorizing district.

Student Eligibility for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

The 77 charter schools operating in 2000-01 served 3,553 students who were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, representing 17.6% of the total enrollment (20,155) of the schools. This number reflects an increase of over 40% from the charter school average of 12.4% in 1997.

The percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch served by the charter schools in 2000-01 ranged from 0% to 89.3%. The state average for the 2000-01 school year was 26.9%.

Of the 77 schools operating in 2000-01,

- 10% (8 schools) served a percentage of free or reduced-price lunch students that was within ten percent (plus or minus) of their chartering district's average percentage of free or reduced-price lunch students,
- 68% (52 schools) served a lower (less than 10%) percentage of students eligible than their chartering district, and
- 22% (17 schools) served a higher percentage (more than 10%) of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch than their chartering district.

Students with Disabilities

The 77 charter schools operating in 2000-01 served students 1,195 students with disabilities. This represents 5.9% of the total enrollment (20,155) of the charter schools. The state average was 9.8%.

Table 5 - Charter Schools and Chartering Districts-Student Characteristics, 2000-01

DISTRICT Charter School	% racial/ethnic minority students	% students eligible for free/reduced lunch
State of Colorado	***31.8%***	***26.9%***
All Charter Schools Included in this Report	***26.3%***	***17.6%***
Academy School District 20	*13.1%*	*4.0%*
The Black Forest School	14.4%	0.0%
The Classical Academy	8.1%	0.0%
Adams 12 Five Star School District	*30.9%*	*21.7%*
Academy of Charter Schools	32.4%	19.3%
Pinnacle Charter School	31.6%	16.0%
Stargate Charter School	22.4%	2.5%
Adams Arapahoe 28J	*59.5%*	*28.9%*
Aurora Academy	34.2%	2.9%
Boulder Valley School District	*19.4%*	*11.9%*
Boulder Prep Charter School	46.3%	0.0%
Horizons Alternative School	11.8%	5.6%
Peak to Peak Charter School	16.8%	0.0%
Sojourner Charter School	67.2%	55.7%
Summit Middle School	9.3%	2.7%
Brighton School District	*42.9%*	*28.9%*
Brighton Charter School	33.9%	14.4%
Canon City School District	*9.8%*	*33.8%*
Mountain View Core Knowledge	7.6%	13.9%
Cherry Creek School District	*23.0%*	*9.2%*
Cherry Creek Academy	8.1%	0.0%
Cheyenne Mountain District 12	*12.5%*	*6.1%*
Cheyenne Mountain Charter	15.7%	20.7
Colorado Springs District 11	*29.5%*	*30.3%*
CIVA Charter School	20.3%	12.0%
Community Prep Charter	35.5%	30.3%
Emerson-Edison Jr. Academy	47.4%	51.8%
GLOBE	22.5%	37.9%
Roosevelt Edison	59.3%	70.6%
Denver Public Schools	*78.0%*	*59.9%*
Challenges, Choices & Images	98.6%	9.7%

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Table 5 (Cont.)- Charter Schools and Chartering Districts-Student Characteristics, 2000-01

DISTRICT **Charter School**	**% racial/ethnic minority students**	**% students eligible for free/reduced lunch**
Community Challenges Charter School	88.1%	69.3%
Denver Arts & Technology Academy	77.3%	51.5%
The Odyssey School	46.4%	19.4%
Pioneer Charter School	96.0%	80.1%
P.S. 1	53.8%	30.7%
Wyatt-Edison Charter School	94.7%	76.2%
Douglas County School District	*9.8%*	*1.8%*
Academy Charter	8.0%	2.3%
DCS Montessori School	10.8%	0.0%
Parker Core Knowledge	4.6%	0.3%
Platte River Academy Charter	8.1%	0.0%
Renaissance Charter	11.1%	0.0%
Durango School District 9-R	*17.5%*	*20.2%*
Community of Learners	21.5%	30.1%
EXCEL School	9.0%	20.7%
Eagle County School District	*36.3%*	*20.1%*
Eagle County Charter	5.2%	0.0%
East Grand School District	*5.6%*	*7.4%*
Indian Peaks Charter School	1.3%	0.0%
Elizabeth School District	*7.8%*	*2.9%*
Elbert County Charter School	12.2%	3.3%
Greeley School District 6	*45.2%*	*45.3%*
Colorado High School	41.3%	44.0%
External - UNC Lab School	27.5%	5.9%
Frontier Academy	20.2%	25.3%
Union Colony Preparatory Academy	15.0%	8.8%
Gunnison Watershed District	*9.1%*	*11.4%*
Marble Charter School	9.1%	0.0%
Harrison School District 2	*59.1%*	*52.3%*
James Irwin Charter High School	16.4%	20.5%
Tutmose Academy	79.6%	44.9%
Jefferson County School District	*17.5%*	*13.7%*
Center for Discovery Learning	18.9%	23.4%

Table 5 (Cont.)- Charter Schools and Chartering Districts-Student Characteristics, 2000-01

DISTRICT **Charter School**	**% racial/ethnic minority students**	**% students eligible for free/reduced lunch**
Collegiate Academy	8.0%	2.5%
Compass Montessori	15.0%	0.0%
Compass Secondary Montessori	16.1%	0.0%
Excel Academy	11.7%	5.0%
Jefferson Academy	8.0%	4.1%
Lincoln Academy	18.4%	1.0%
Montessori Peaks Academy	11.2%	0.0%
Rocky Mountain Deaf School	10.0%	30.0%
Woodrow Wilson Charter Academy	12.1%	1.1%
Keenseburg School District RE-3J	*25.6%*	*30.1%*
Cardinal Community Academy	5.6%	18.3%
Lamar School District	*43.1%*	*51.9%*
Alta Vista Charter School	18.0%	30.3%
Lewis Palmer School District	*7.1%*	*3.6%*
Monument Charter Academy	16.1%	0.0%
Littleton School District	*11.4%*	*10.0%*
Littleton Academy	6.7%	0.9%
Littleton Preparatory Charter School	21.2%	1.7%
Moffat Consolidated No. 2	*24.1%*	*50.2%*
Crestone Charter School	18.4%	22.4%
Montezuma Cortez	*35.9%*	*45.6%*
Battle Rock Charter School	11.5%	42.3%
Southwest Open Charter High School	50.3%	38.9%
Montrose County School District	*23.6%*	*38.4%*
Passage Charter School	52.0%	76.0%
Park County School District	*9.7%*	*19.8%*
Guffey Charter School	15.0%	37.5%
Lake George Charter School	5.3%	25.4%
Poudre School District	*17.5%*	*16.9%*
Liberty Common School	9.8%	6.2%
Pueblo School District 60	*59.6%*	*55.0%*
Pueblo School Arts-Sciences	49.0%	51.5%
Youth and Family Academy	76.7%	89.3%

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Table 5 (Cont.)- Charter Schools and Chartering Districts-Student Characteristics, 2000-01

DISTRICT Charter School	% racial/ethnic minority students	% students eligible for free/reduced lunch
Pueblo School District 70	*26.6%*	*25.0%*
Connect Charter School	20.9%	0.0%
Swallows Academy	16.8%	0.0%
Roaring Fork School District	*27.5%*	*17.3%*
Aspen/Carbondale Community School	8.0%	0.0%
Strasburg School District	*6.9%*	*12.8%*
Prairie Creeks Charter School	5.3%	0.0%
St. Vrain School District	*25.4%*	*17.7%*
Twin Peaks Charter School	12.4%	3.7%
Ute Creek Secondary Academy	17.5%	0.0%
West End School District RE-2	Not available	
Paradox Valley Charter School	16.7%	83.3%
West End Learning Center	0.0%	41.2%
Westminster School District 50	54.9%	40.5%
Crown Pointe Academy	39.6%	0.0%

Date Source: Colorado Department of Education, Fall 2000.

POINTS OF REFERENCE

National Charter Schools

- **Racial/Ethnic Composition:** In 1998-99, the most recent date for which data are available, charter schools enrolled approximately 11% fewer white students than all public schools (48% versus 59%) in the 27 chartering states included in the national study. Sixty-nine percent of charter schools were within 20 percent of their surrounding district's percentage of nonwhite students, while almost 18% had a distinctly higher percentage of students of color than their surrounding district. Approximately 14% of schools had a lower percentage of students of color than their surrounding district.

- **Student Eligibility for Free/Reduced-Price Lunch:** In 1998-99, charter schools served a slightly higher percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch than all public schools in the 27 charter states included in the national study (39% versus 37%). In six of the charter states, including Colorado, the percentage of eligible students was at least 10 points lower in charter schools than in all public schools. The percentage of eligible students was at least 10 points higher in charters than in all public schools in 11 of the charter states included in the study.

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PART SIX

GOVERNANCE OF COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOLS

Governing Board Composition

The Colorado charter schools in this report were required to propose a governance structure in their charter applications. The chartering district approved this structure, either as submitted or as modified through negotiations, in the charter school contract.

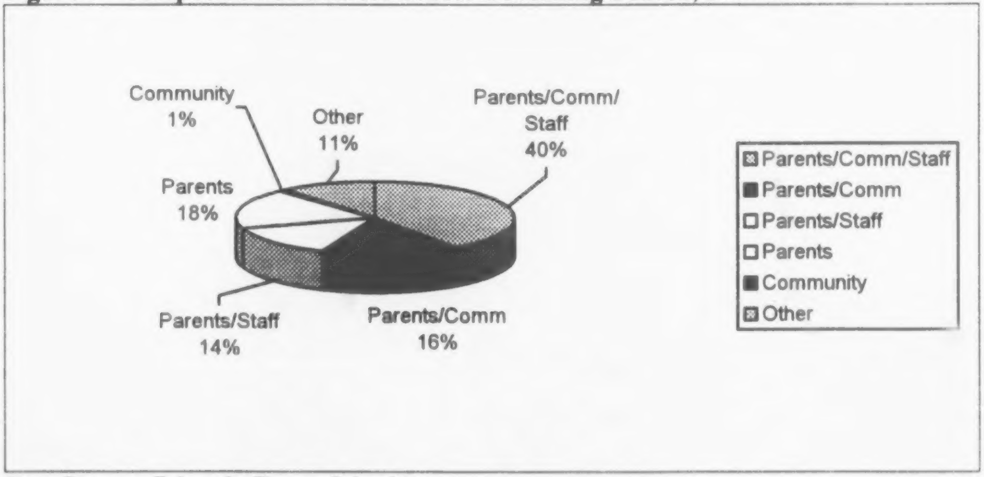
These charter school governing bodies had authority over curriculum, personnel, budget and all other aspects of the school, under the terms and conditions of the charter contract with the chartering district. Almost all charter schools in the report employed an administrator (sometimes called a dean, educational director, or a lead teacher instead of a principal) who was responsible for making day-to-day operational decisions.

All 77 of the charter schools operating in 2000-01 provided information about the composition of their governing boards during that year. Of these schools:

- 40% (30 schools) had a governing board comprised of parents, school staff and community members,
- 18% (14 schools) had a board comprised of parents only,
- 16% (12 schools) had a board comprised of parents and community members,
- 14% (11 schools) had a board comprised of parents and school staff,
- 1% (1 school) had a board comprised of community members only, and
- 11% (8 schools) had unique governing board configurations that reflected the origin and mission of their schools.[49]

Parents held a majority on the governing boards in 52% of the charter schools included in this study.

Figure 6 - Composition of Charter School Governing Boards, 2000-01



Data Source: Colorado Charter Schools

PART SEVEN

COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOL TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

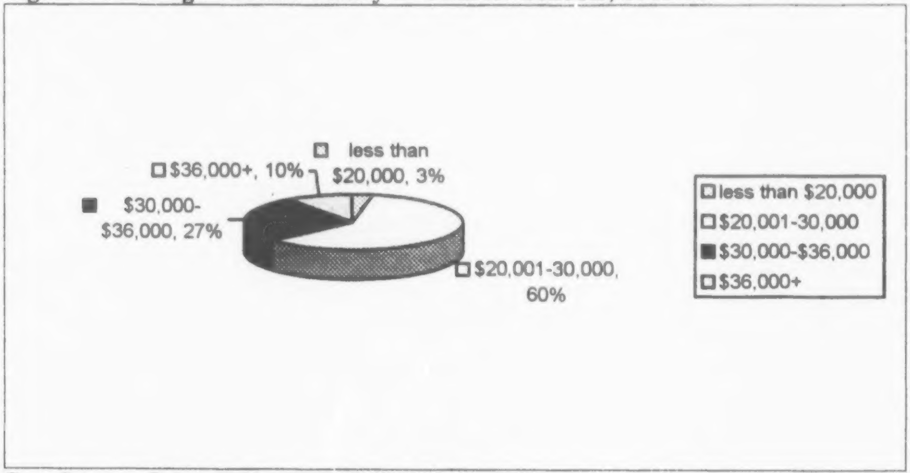
Charter School Teacher Salaries

Seventy-three of the 77 charter schools operating in the 2000-01 school year reported average teacher salaries on their School Accountability Reports (SARs). The average teacher salary of the charter schools was $28,835. Average teacher salaries in individual charter schools ranged from $17,453 to $41,682.

Of the 73 charter schools for which teacher salary data was available:

- 3% (2 schools) had average teacher salaries of under $20,000,
- 60% (44 schools) had average teacher salaries of between $20,001 and $30,000,
- 27% (20 schools) had average teacher salaries of between 30,001 and $36,000, and
- 10% (7 schools) had average teacher salaries of over $36,000.

Figure 7: Average Teacher Salary in Charter Schools, 2000-01



Date Source: Colorado Department of Education.

POINTS OF REFERENCE

State of Colorado

The average teacher salary in Colorado in 2000-01 was $40,887.

Trend Data

The average salary for teachers in charter schools has consistently been significantly less than the average teacher salary for the State of Colorado. For example, in the fall of 1997, the average salary for teachers in charter schools was $26,802, while the average teacher salary in the state of Colorado was $37,240. The gap between the average charter school teacher salary and the state average salary is greater now than it was four years ago.

Charter School Teacher Experience

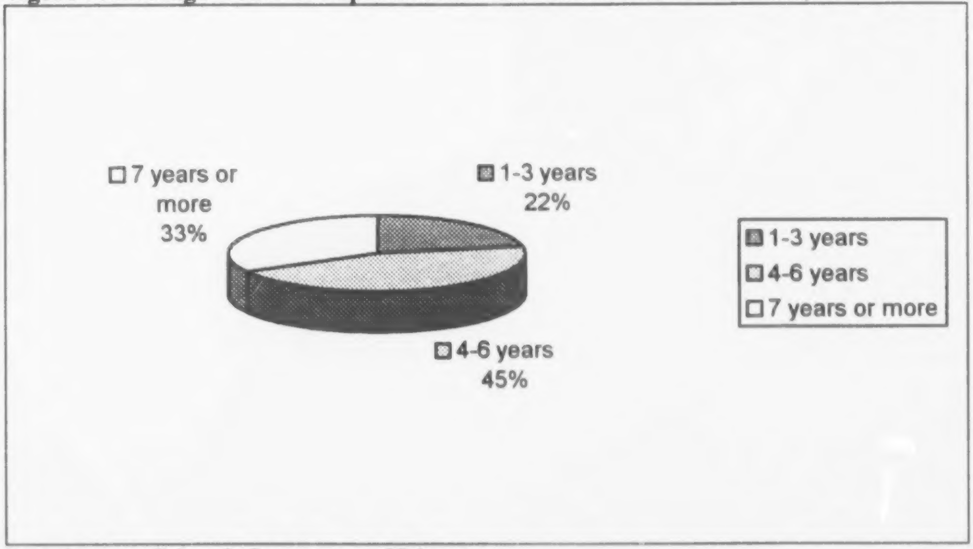
Of the 77 charter schools operating in 2000-01, the School Accountability Reports (SARs) of 67 schools contained data related to the average number of years of experience their teachers had.

The average experience of teachers in Colorado charter schools was six years. The average experience ranged among individual charter schools from one year to 17 years.

Of these 67 schools that reported data,

- 22% (15 schools) had a teaching staff with an average of one to three years experience.
- 45% (30 schools) had a teaching staff with an average of four to six years of experience.
- 33% (22 schools) had a teaching staff with an average of seven or more years of teaching experience.

Figure 8: Average Years of Experience of Teachers in Charter Schools, 2000-01



Data Source: Colorado Department of Education

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POINTS OF REFERENCE

State of Colorado

The average teaching experience of all public classroom teachers in Colorado in fall of 2000 was 11.8 years.

Trend Data

The average years of teaching experience of Colorado charter school teachers has stayed relatively constant over time. In 1997, charter school teachers, on average, had 5.7 years of teaching experience.

Educational Background of Charter School Teachers

Of the 77 charter schools operating in 2000-01, 67 reported data to CDE about the percentage of their teachers who held a Masters Degree or higher post-secondary degree.

The average percentage of charter school teachers who held a Masters Degree or higher in 2000-01 was 26.0%. The percentage of teachers that held a Masters Degree or higher ranged in individual Colorado charter schools from 0.0% to 100.0%.

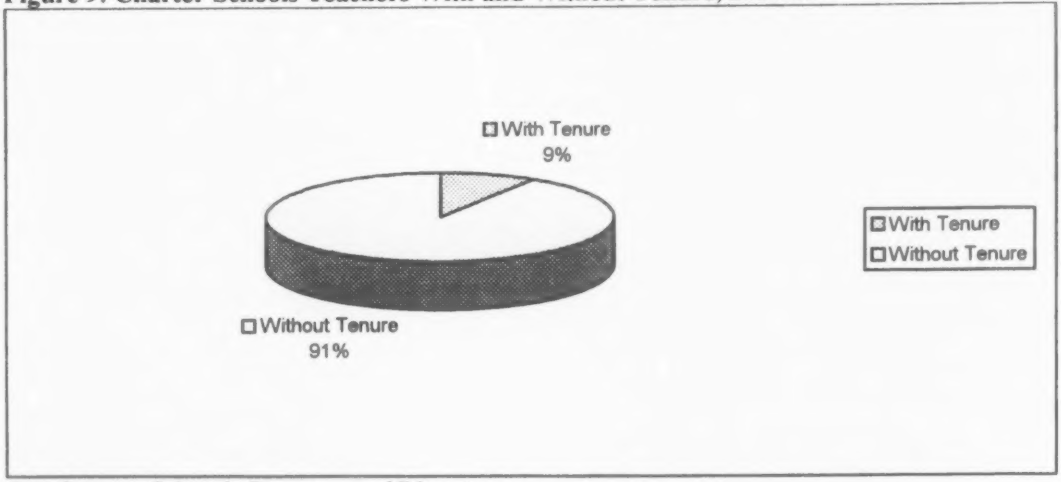
Statewide, 44.9% of public school teachers held a Masters Degree or higher post-secondary degree.

Tenure in Charter Schools

Data on the number of teachers employed by charter schools with tenure and without tenure were available for 74 of the 77 charter schools operating in the 2000-01 school year. In these 74 charter schools, 1,098 of the teachers employed during the 2000-01 school year did not have tenure and 108 did have tenure.

Many charter schools sought and received a waiver from the state's Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal Act (Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-53-201 et seq.) Refer to Part Nine of this report for the relevant discussion.

Figure 9: Charter Schools Teachers With and Without Tenure, 2000-01



Date Source: Colorado Department of Education.

Number of Professional Development Days

Data on the number of professional development days provided by charter schools to their teachers during the 2000-01 school year were available for 75 of the 77 charter schools operating during the 2000-01 school year. The professional development days ranged from a high of 43 days to a low of 1.0 day. The average number of professional development days was 6.9 and the median number of days was 6.0.

Teachers' Average Days Absent

The School Accountability reports provide data about the teacher absentee rate during the 2000-01 school year. Data related to the average number of days charter school teachers were absent in 2000-01 were available for 75 of the charter schools operating in that school year. The average days absent ranged from a high of 11.7% to a low of 0%. The average absentee rate was 2.5%. The median average absentee rate was 1.9%.

Teacher Turnover in Charter Schools

The School Accountability Reports track the number of teachers who left the school in the previous year. To calculate the teacher turnover or attrition rate for 2000-01, this number was divided by the total number of teachers in the school.

Data used to calculate the teacher turnover rate were available for 71 of the 77 charter schools operating during the 2000-01 school year. The average teacher turnover rate for these charter schools was 24.4%. The charter school teacher turnover rate ranged from a low of 0.0% to a high of 74.7%. The median teacher turnover rate in charter schools was 22.3%.

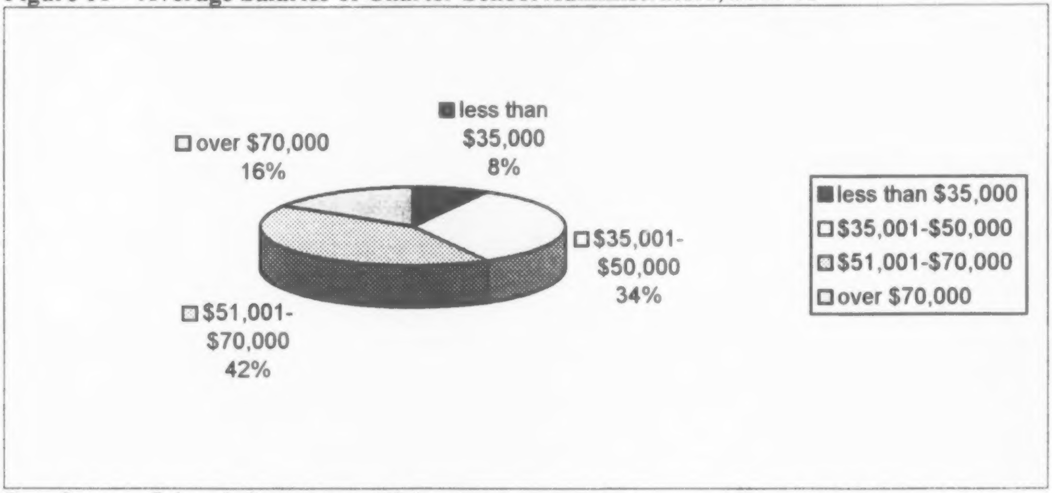
Charter School Administrator Salaries

Of the 77 charter schools operating in 2000-01, the School Accountability Reports (SARs) of 64 schools contained data about the salaries of their administrators. The average salary of charter school administrators in 2000-01 was $55,218, significantly less than the average administrator salary for the state of Colorado. The average administrator salary in charter schools ranged from a $27,954 to $109,693.

Of the 64 reporting schools:

- 8% (5 schools) had average administrator salaries of less than $35,000,
- 34% (22 schools) had average administrator salaries of $35,001 - $50,000,
- 42% (27 schools) had average administrator salaries of $51,001 - $70,000, and
- 16% (10 schools) had salaries of over $70,000.

Figure 10 – Average Salaries of Charter School Administrators, 2000-01



Data Source: Colorado Department of Education

POINTS OF REFERENCE

State of Colorado

The average salary of Colorado public school principals in 2000-01 was $66,160.

Trend Data

This annual report did not begin tracking the average administrator salary in charter schools prior to 1999. In that year, the average administrator salary in Colorado charter schools was $52,417.

Charter School Administrator Experience

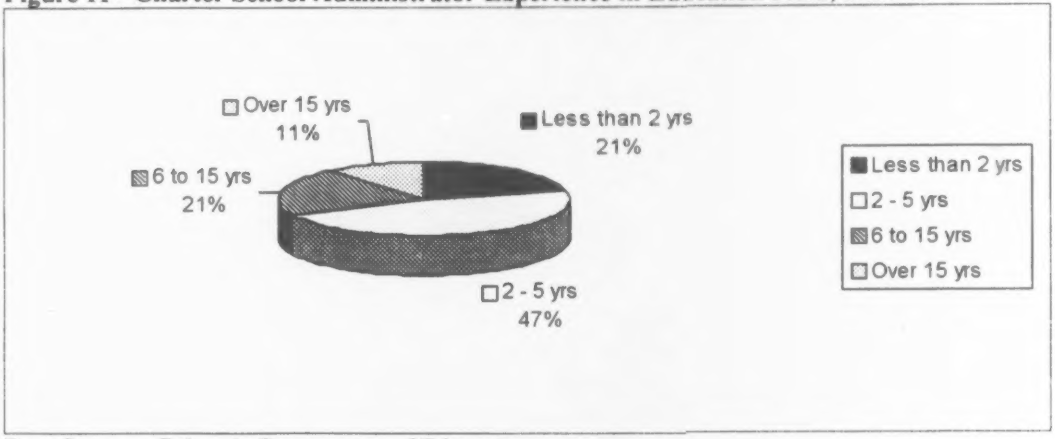
Of the 77 charter schools operating in 2000-01, 47 schools reported data in their School Accountability Reports (SARs) regarding their administrators' experience in the field of education.

The average experience of charter school administrators was 6.0 years. Charter school administrator experience in the field of education ranged from a high of 31 years to a low of no previous experience as an administrator.

Of these 47 reporting charter schools,

- 21% (10 schools) had lead administrators with less than two years experience in the field of education and
- 47% (22 schools) had lead administrators with 2 to 5 years experience in the field; and
- 21% (10 schools) had lead administrators with 6 to 15 years experience in the field; and
- 11% (5 schools) had lead administrators with over 15 years of experience in the field.

Figure 11 - Charter School Administrator Experience in Education Field, 2000-01



Data Source: Colorado Department of Education

POINTS OF REFERENCE

State of Colorado

In the fall of 2000, the average Colorado public school administrator had served 6.8 years at any school.

National Charter Schools

A national study completed by the Washington-based nonprofit consulting group StandardsWork in May 2000 found that at a national level almost 80% of charter school directors had worked in the education field just prior to taking a position in a charter school. Thirty percent were former teachers, 10% were private school principals, 17% were public school principals, and 22% were school administrators. The rest came from other professions. According to the study, most charter schools administrators took their jobs because they wanted to achieve excellence or gain more freedom than traditional public schools offer.[50]

Average Tenure of Charter School Lead Administrator

Sixty-five schools operating during the 2000-01 academic year provided data related to the average tenure of their lead administrators. In schools with more than one administrator, the lead administrator is the head or primary administrator with final decision-making authority.
The average tenure was calculated by dividing the total number of years the school had been in operation by the total number of lead administrators employed by the school. Schools that had been open for less than two years were not included in this calculation. In the 65 schools for which data were available, the average tenure of lead charter school administrators was 2.5 years. Charter school lead administrator tenure ranged from a low of one year to a high of eight years. The median lead administrator tenure was 2.0 years.

PART EIGHT

MEASURES OF CHARTER SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Overview

The report includes several different kinds of data to present a multidimensional picture of the performance of Colorado charter schools during the 2000-01 school year:

1. Indicators of safety and school environment,
2. The level of parent involvement,
3. Market-based indicators, such as the demand for the schools (waiting lists), parent satisfaction, and re-enrollment rates,
4. Charter school renewals and closures,
5. Performance on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP), and
6. School ratings for "Overall Academic Performance" contained in the inaugural School Accountability Reports.

1. Indicators of Safety and School Environment

SAFE AND ORDERLY SCHOOLS

Pursuant to state law, the School Accountability Reports provide information on six features that are associated with safe and orderly schools. Table 6 shows the percentage of charter schools operating in 2000-01 that contained each feature:

Table 6: Charter Schools with Safe and Orderly School Features Designated in the SARs

Safe and Orderly School Features	**Percentage of Charter Schools Operating in 2000-01**
Allows after-school programs	94.7%
Requires student uniforms	30.3%
Encourages community programs in school building	92.1%
Conducts home visits	59.2%
Has a closed campus	85.5%
Requires parent conferences	90.8%

SAFETY AND DISCIPLINE RECORDS

Each charter school's School Accountability Reports sets out the number and type of disciplinary incidents that occurred at the school during the year. The SAR also identifies the action taken in response to the incidents (e.g. in-school suspension, expulsion, referred to law enforcement). Seventy of the 77 charter schools operating in 2000-01 provided data about disciplinary incidents in their SARs. The number of incidents ranged from a low of zero to a high of 250. The average number of disciplinary incidents was 35.4. The median number of disciplinary incidents was nine.

Comparisons among schools of the total number of disciplinary incidents can be misleading because the charter schools vary in size so dramatically. To adjust for school size, the number of disciplinary incidents was divided by the school's enrollment to produce a rate of disciplinary incidences. This data was available for 70 of the 77 charter schools operating during the 2000-01 school year. The average rate of disciplinary incidents was 14.8%. The disciplinary incident referral rate ranged from 0% to 248%. The median rate was 6%.

The rate of disciplinary referrals reflects many factors, including the strictness of a school's discipline code, the population the school serves and the school's capacity (including adequate resources) to provide alternative learning environments for disruptive students.

Charter schools have the autonomy to adopt a different student discipline code and disciplinary policy than those in force in the chartering district. Prior evaluation studies indicated that about half of the charter schools either adopted a discipline policy that was different than their chartering district's policy or modified the district's policy, usually to provide a more explicit definition of consequences or the application of stricter consequences for violation of the policy.

2. Parent Involvement in Colorado Charter Schools

As a general rule, the cohort of charter schools operating in 2000-01 engaged parents at a high level of involvement. Research has shown that parental involvement has a profound effect on student achievement. Students whose parents are involved in their education are more enthusiastic and confident learners and achieve at higher levels. Similarly, schools where parents are involved are more effective at meeting the needs of all students.[51] In public schools generally, parent involvement tends to be higher in elementary schools than in middle and high schools and higher in schools that are not significantly impacted by poverty than in schools that are.[52] These general trends held across Colorado charter schools as well.

Table 7 provides some insight into the extent and depth of parent involvement in charter schools. The table shows the school's enrollment to provide a context for the number of volunteer hours contributed by parents or other family members. The table incorporates the two different measures charter schools used to track parent involvement: the total number of hours volunteered by parents or family members during the school year and the percentage of families in the school who volunteered. Some charter schools maintained data in both formats. The majority used one format or the other. Blank cells indicate that the schools did not provide data.

Seventy-one (92%) of the charter schools operating in 2000-01 regularly administered a parent satisfaction survey.

Thirty-three (44%) of the charter schools operating in 2000-01 used a required parent contract to spell out the school's expectations of parents related to their involvement in the school and in their children's education.

Table 7 – Parent Involvement in Charter Schools – 2000-01

Charter School (Chartering District)	Enrollment	Total Hours Volunteered	% of Parents/ Families Who Volunteered	Parent Satisfaction Survey?	Parent Contract?
Academy Charter School (Douglas County School District)	477	12,000 hours		yes	yes
Academy of Charter Schools (Adams 12 Five Star)	829	21,102 hours	87.5%	yes	yes
Alta Vista Charter School (Lamar School District)	89	2,543 hours		yes	no
Aurora Academy (Adams-Arapahoe 28J)	444		70%	yes	yes
Aspen-Carbondale Community School (Roaring Fork)	212		50%	yes	no
Battle Rock Charter School (Montezuma Cortez)	26		50%	yes	yes
The Black Forest School (Academy 20)	125			no	no
Boulder Preparatory Charter High School (Boulder Valley)	54		50%	yes, through district	no
Brighton Charter School (Brighton School District)	395	872 hours		yes	no
Cardinal Community Academy (Keenesburg School District)	71	4,653 hours		yes	yes
Center for Discovery Learning (Jefferson County School District)	244		40%	yes	no
Challenges, Choices & Images (Denver Public Schools)	72	1,400 hours	97%	yes	yes
Cherry Creek Academy (Cherry Creek School District)	446		85%	yes	yes
Cheyenne Mountain Academy (Cheyenne Mountain Dist. 12)	324			yes	no
CIVA Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11)	133	1,100 hours		yes	no
Classical Academy (Academy School District)	621	4,211 hours		yes	no
Collegiate Academy of Colorado (Jefferson County)	585	14,873 hours		yes	no
Colorado High School (Greeley School District 6)	109	3 parent conferences		yes	yes
Community Challenge Charter (Denver Public Schools)	101	2,020 hours	80%	yes	yes
Community of Learners (Durango School District)	93			yes	no
Community Prep (Colorado Springs District 11)	152		25%	yes	yes
Compass Montessori School (Jefferson County School District)	180	8,000 hours		yes	no
Compass Montessori Secondary School (Jefferson County)	31	3,000 hours		yes	no
CONNECT Charter School (Pueblo School District 70)	139		5%	no	no
Crestone Charter School (Moffat Consolidated Sch. Dist)	49	1,000 hours		yes	yes
Crown Pointe Charter School (Westminster District 50)	227	7,391 hours		yes	yes
DCS Montessori Charter School (Douglas County School District)	279		75%	yes	no
Denver Arts & Technology Acdy (Denver Public Schools)	132		60%	yes	yes

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Table 7 (Cont.) - Parent Involvement in Charter Schools –2000-01

Charter School (Chartering District)	Enrollment	Total Hours Volunteered	% of Parents/ Families Who Volunteered	Annual Parent Satisfaction Survey?	Parent Contract?
Eagle County Charter School (Eagle County School District)	192	12,090 hours	89%	yes	no
Elbert County Charter School (Elizabeth School District)	271	6,520 hours		yes	no
Excel Academy (Jefferson County School District)	120	6,427 hours		yes	no
EXCEL School (Durango 9-R School District)	111	1,824 hours	67%	yes	yes
External (UNC) Laboratory School (Weld County School Dist.)	639	5,040 hours		no	no
Frontier Academy (Greeley School District 6)	521	8,368 hours		yes	yes
GLOBE Charter School (Colorado Springs District 11)	169	7,032 hours	54%	yes	yes
Guffey Charter School (Park School District)	40	600 hours	40%	yes	no
Horizons Alternative School (Boulder Valley School District)	306			yes	no
Indian Peaks Charter School (East Grand School District)	78		97%	no	no
James Irwin Charter High Sch. (Harrison School District 2)	122	1,042 hours		yes	no
Jefferson Academy (Jefferson County School District)	651	14,146 hours	65%	yes	no
Lake George Charter School (Park School District RE-2)	118		60%	yes	no
Liberty Common School (Poudre School District)	550		80%	yes	no
Lincoln Academy (Jefferson County School District)	288	9,406 hours		yes	yes
Littleton Academy (Littleton School District)	450	15,000 hours		yes	yes
Littleton Preparatory Charter School (Littleton School District)	466	19,396 hours		yes	no
Marble Charter School (Gunnison Watershed Sch. Dist.)	22		95%	yes	no
Montessori Peaks Academy (Jefferson County School District)	241		89%	yes	Preschool only
Monument Charter Academy (Lewis Palmer School District)	440	8,000 hours		yes	yes
Mountain View Core Knowledge (Canon City School District)	223		50%	yes	no
The Odyssey School (Denver Public Schools)	198		95%	yes	yes
Paradox Valley School (West End School District RE-2)	18			yes	no
Parker Core Knowledge Charter (Douglas County School District)	368	10,137 hours	80%	yes	yes
Passage Charter School (Montrose County School District)	25		10%	yes	no
Peak to Peak Charter School (Boulder Valley School District)	196		51%	yes	no
Pinnacle Charter School (Adams 12 Five Star)	661	6,500 hours		yes	no

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Table 7 (Cont.) - Parent Involvement in Charter Schools –2000-01

Charter School (Chartering District)	Enrollment	Total Hours Volunteered	% of Parents/ Families Who Volunteered	Annual Parent Satisfaction Survey?	Parent Contract?
Pioneer Charter School (Denver Public Schools)	301			yes	yes
Platte River Academy (Douglas County School District)	396	11,508 hours		yes	no
Prairie Creeks Charter School (Strasburg School District)	19		10%	no	no
P.S. 1 (Denver Public Schools)	264		20%	yes	yes
Pueblo School Arts-Sciences (Pueblo 60 School District)	402		96%	yes	yes
Renaissance Charter (Douglas County School District)	316	9,850 hours		yes	no
Rocky Mountain Deaf School (Jefferson County School District)	30		20%	yes	yes
Roosevelt-Edison Charter (Colo. Springs Dist. 11)	717	7,000 hours		yes	yes
Emerson-Edison Junior Charter Academy (Co. Springs Dist. 11)	722	7,000+ hours		yes	yes
Sojourner Charter School (Boulder Valley School District)	61	50 hours		yes	yes
Southwest Open Charter School (Montezuma Cortez)	149		60%	yes	no
Stargate Charter School (Adams 12 Five Star)	241	6,000 hours	75%	yes	no
Summit Middle School (Boulder Valley School District)	259		Over 50%	yes	no
Swallows Charter Academy (Pueblo School District 70)	185	1,707 hours		yes	yes
TutmoseAcademy Charter (Harrison School District 2)	49	2,854 hours	50%	yes	yes
Twin Peaks Charter Academy (St. Vrain School District)	483		75%	yes	yes
Union Colony Preparatory School (Greeley District 6)	147		35%	yes	no
Ute Creek Secondary Academy (St. Vrain School District)	137		47%	yes	no
West End Learning Center/Alt. School (West End School District)	17			no	yes
Woodrow Wilson Charter Academy (Jefferson County)	182	16,800 hours		yes	no
Wyatt-Edison Charter School (Denver Public Schools)	665		42%	yes	yes
Youth & Family Academy (Pueblo School District 60)	103		12%	yes	yes

Data Source: Colorado Charter Schools

3. Market-Based Indicators

As schools of choice, charter schools also can be fairly measured by market-based indicators, such as the demand for the school (waiting lists), parent satisfaction and re-enrollment rates. (Waiting list data are contained in the school profiles of individual charter schools, available on the CDE website: www.cde.state.co.us. Many charter schools in this study have extensive waiting lists, frequently exceeding the school's enrollment by several times.

This 2000-01 report did not collect data related to parent satisfaction rates and re-enrollment rates because of the transition to the SAR-based focus of accountability. In prior years, however, charter schools, as a cohort group, consistently demonstrated high rates of parent satisfaction and met or exceeded their goals for re-enrollment.

4. Charter School Renewals/Closures

Under the Colorado Charter Schools Act, the renewal process is the ultimate tool of accountability. A charter renewal signals the satisfaction of the chartering or authorizing district that the charter school is fulfilling the commitments spelled out in its charter contract. Since the Charter Schools Act became law, only one charter school has been denied a renewal of its charter by the authorizing district. Moreover, in all but one instance, the charter schools that renewed their charters received a renewal term equal to or greater than the original term of the charter.[53]

The process used by chartering districts to consider the renewal of a charter varied on a district-by-district basis. The range of renewal activities completed by schools in this report included:

- Completion of a renewal application with a question and response format requiring extensive attachments.
- Negotiations with district officials.
- Public hearings.
- An outside educational audit.
- A site review by district review team.
- Completion of a renewal criteria checklist addressed to five major areas: Academics, Goals and Objectives, Financial, Administration and Governance, and Accountability.

Increasingly, chartering school districts are beginning to incorporate elements of the Colorado League of Charter School's Accountability and Evaluation Plan into their renewal processes. The plan involves a guided self-study, site visits from outside observers (a team of five to seven educators) and access to consultants. Its purposes are to help charter schools meet their contractual obligations, to foster a process that leads to careful reflection within the school community on its progress, and in the end, to offer both the district and the school the benefit of an outside perspective on the school's progress.

Several large districts (Douglas County School District, Jefferson County School District, Colorado Springs District 11) have formally adopted the external team's visit and report as a key component in the renewal process for their charter schools. A set of "Critical Questions" that were designed by the League with input from charter schools guides the external team's review. In addition, Colorado Springs District 11 expects to proceed with other key steps in the League's Accountability Plan, including the school's own self-study based on the same set of Critical Questions. Several other districts have found the self-studies completed by the charter schools, as well as the outside reports of the visiting teams, to be of value in their efforts to evaluate the progress of charter schools.

The self-study process can take much of a year to complete. The site visits usually take place over a two- to three-day period. The visit teams' reports are usually completed and sent to the schools, and where requested, to the chartering districts, within two to three weeks of the visit. These written reports contain a series of observations, recommendations and commendations.

CLOSURES

From the inception of the Colorado Charter Schools Act through the end of the 2000-01 school year, only three charter schools have closed.[54] Two of these were voluntary closures.

- The Clayton Charter School (Denver Public Schools) was closed voluntarily by the charter operator at the end of the 1996-97 school year after three years of operation. The discontinuation of the school was prompted by the decision of the Denver Public Schools to establish its own charter school in the same service area.

- In October 1999, the Alpine Charter School (Summit School District) closed because of declining enrollment. Concerns about its upcoming renewal process apparently contributed to the school's decision to close.

- In June 2000, the State Board of Education, after two hearings, upheld the decision of the Douglas County School District RE-1 Board of Education not to renew the charter contract of the Colorado Visionary Charter School. The State Board found that the decision of the local board of education was not contrary to the best interests of the pupils in the school district and community. The State Board had previously (on March 1, 2000) remanded the non-renewal decision back to the local board of education with instructions to reconsider as follows:
  - That the charter school develop and present to the school district a mutually agreeable budget for the term of the contract.
  - That the charter school and school district obtain written resolution of the pending lawsuits involving the charter school.
  - That the charter school present to the school district a satisfactory long-term facility solution, to include financing.
  - That the charter school and school district develop mutually agreeable district oversight provisions to be included in the contract.

This represents a closure rate of 3.8%, calculated by dividing the number of closures (3) by the total number of charter schools that had operated from 1993 to the fall of 2000 (80).

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5. Charter School Performance on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)

The Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) is a statewide assessment, aligned with the state model content standards. During the 2000-2001 academic year, the focus of this study, CSAP tests were administered in Reading at grades 3 - 10, in Writing at grades 4, 7 and 10, and in Mathematics in grades 5, 8 and 10.

CSAP reports student performance using four levels:
- Unsatisfactory
- Partially proficient – does not meet the standards
- Proficient - meets the standards
- Advanced - exceeds the standards.

This section of the report applies two difference lenses to the performance of charter schools, as a cohort group, on the Colorado Student Assessment Program, looking at:
- The performance of charter schools compared to the state as a whole;
- The performance of charter schools compared to non-charter public schools that serve a "matched" population in terms of student race/ethnicity and eligibility for free/reduced-price lunch; and

Each analysis was conducted for the 4th grade Reading, 5th grade Reading, 7th grade Writing and 9th grade Reading CSAP assessments. This focus crosses two different subjects and encompasses elementary, middle and high schools.

CHARTER SCHOOLS COMPARED TO STATE AVERAGE

As a group, the charter schools tended to perform well on the Colorado Student Assessment Program. As shown in Table 8, the charter school average exceeded the state average by 10 percentage points on the 4th grade Reading assessment, 10 points on the 5th grade Reading assessment, and nine points on the 7th grade Writing assessment. The charter school average trailed the state average by five points on the 9th grade Reading assessment.

The number of schools reported on Table 8 is smaller than the total number of schools that administered the CSAP assessments in the state for two reasons. First, the data used for this analysis only included schools that reported results (e.g., schools in which more than 16 students took the test). Second, the data files available from CDE for this analysis were organized by separate ethnic groups within a school rather than for the school in aggregate. Therefore, this analysis may also have excluded smaller charter schools that reported results overall, but whose results did not appear in the data files for particular ethnic groups because the number of students in each group was less than 16.

Table 8: Comparison of Weighted and Non-Weighted Charter School Average CSAP Scores with Average Scores for the State of Colorado

	4th Grade Reading	5th Grade Reading	7th Grade Writing	9th Grade Reading
State Average (N)	63% (756)	64% (754)	41% (293)	63% (331)
Non-weighted Charter School Average (N)	75.66% (37)	74.39% (34)	50.69% (36)	49.11% (28)
Weighted Charter School Average (N)	73.14% (37)	73.13% (34)	49.74% (36)	58.33% (28)

(N) is the number of schools included in the calculation.

Table 8 shows both weighted and non-weighted charter school averages. Weighting accounts for the different sizes of schools within a category when calculating an average for that category. The weighted charter school score is calculated by multiplying the percentage proficient and advanced for a school by the number of students in that school who took the test. The process of weighting influences the totals and the means scores of all schools in the category as well as of the overall category, giving larger schools more weight in the total average. While weighting is generally considered a more accurate way to present the average scores of schools of differing sizes, it allows a very large school with very poor scores to impact the overall picture in a negative way. It is relevant in this connection that the charter schools with the largest number of students taking the CSAP in each grade had among the lowest scores. For example, the three charter schools with the largest number of students taking the Reading CSAP test in 4th grade (112,76, and 75 students) had scores of 35%, 92%, and 57% proficient or advanced while the four charter schools with the smallest number of students taking that test (21, 21, 22, and 22) had scores of 60%, 76%, 88%, and 91%.

CHARTER SCHOOLS COMPARED TO "MATCHED" PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Colorado Charter Schools Act specifically directs that this report "shall compare the performance of charter school pupils with the performance of ethnically and economically comparable groups of pupils in other public schools who are enrolled in academically comparable courses."

This is an important focus from a policy perspective. However, it presents several challenges from the perspective of statistics and data analysis. First, because there were so many fewer charter schools than non-charter public schools, the charter school averages were more affected by the performance of a school or group of schools at either end of the performance spectrum than the non-charter school averages were. Additionally, when the charter schools' scores were distributed across various categories for purposes of matching or comparing results, the number of schools in any one category often fell below 15. A commonly held research standard, applied to federal research studies, is that results should not be reported when the N (or number of schools) is fewer than 15.

Second, because charter schools, in general, tend to be smaller than non-charter schools, a higher percentage of charter schools administered the CSAP but were not able to report data than their non-charter public school counterparts.

Third, the free/reduced-price lunch eligibility data very likely was under-reported for charter schools. It is difficult to determine the impact of this underreporting on the data described below.

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The categories used for "matching" the charter schools and non-charter schools (quintiles) were broad enough to likely still have included many of the schools that underreported.

Charter schools and non-charter public schools that reported CSAP results were "matched" within identified ranges:

- less than 20% minority and less than 20% eligible for free/reduced-price lunch;
- 21-40% minority and 21-40% eligible for free/reduced-price lunch;
- 41-60% minority and 41-60% eligible for free/reduced-price lunch;
- 61-80% minority and 61-80% eligible for free/reduced-price lunch; and
- 81-100% minority and 81-100% eligible for free/reduced-price lunch.

Each school's average percentage of students that scored at the proficient level or above was weighted by the number of students who took that test. Then all the weighted values for the individual charter schools were added up and averaged to produce a charter school average. The same process was applied for non-charter public schools.

CDE was interested in exploring the relative performance of the various reform models adopted by the charter schools as part of the matched comparison analysis. These models are described in Part Four of this report. The cohort of charter schools using the Core Knowledge model was the only cohort of schools large enough to support such an analysis.

Fourth Grade Reading

To frame the analysis, Table 9 compares the charter and non-charter schools by the number of fourth grade students who took the CSAP. Again, note that schools did not report results when fewer than 16 students took the test. Table 10 provides a demographic comparison of the charter and non-charter schools that reported 4th grade reading CSAP results.

Table 9: Comparison of Charter and Non-Charter Schools by Number of Students who Took the 4th Grade Reading CSAP

	Charter Schools		*Noncharter Schools*	
Number of Students	All Schools	Reporting Schools	All Schools	Reporting Schools
1-20	26.4%	0.0%	9.0%	1.2%
21-40	39.6%	51.4%	12.8%	13.5%
41-60	24.5%	35.1%	20.7%	22.6%
61-80	7.5%	10.8%	24.6%	26.9%
81-100	0.0%	0.0%	20.6%	22.3%
101-253	1.9%	2.7%	12.3%	13.5%

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Table 10: Demographic Comparison of Charter and Noncharter Schools that Reported 4th Grade Reading CSAP Results

% Free /Reduced-Price Lunch			% Minority		
%	***Charter***	***Noncharter***	**%**	***Charter***	***Noncharter***
0%	29.7%	.3%	0-6%	29.7%	8.9%
.1-5%	35.2%	13.6%	6.1-10%	16.2%	11.1%
5.1-30%	24.3%	36.0%	10.1-30%	32.5%	37.2%
30.1+	10.8%	50.1%	30.1+	21.6%	41.8%
	N= 37	N=755		N=37	N=756
0-20%	81.1%	36.8%	0-20%	67.6%	41.5%
21-40%	8.1%	26.9%	21-40%	24.3%	25.7%
41-60%	2.7%	17.5%	41-60%	2.7%	14.8%
61-80%	5.4%	13.0%	61-80%	0.0%	9.3%
81-100%	2.7%	5.8%	81-100%	5.4%	8.7%

Table 11, below, shows the results of the matching. In the 0-20% / 0-20% quintile band for both percent minority and percent free/reduced-price lunch eligibility, the charter school average percentage of students scoring at the proficient level or above was slightly higher than the non-charter public school average, for both charter schools generally and for Core Knowledge charter schools specifically. The Core Knowledge charter schools scored slightly higher than all charter schools.

In the 21-40% / 21-40% quintile band, the charter school average exceeded the non-charter school average by almost 23 percentage points. In the 81-100% / 81-100% category, the charter school average was lower than the non-charter school average. These results for these quintiles are not included in the table because fewer than fifteen schools fell into these categories.

Table 11: Charter and Non-Charter Average Percentage of Students Scoring at the Proficient Level or Above on the 4th Grade Reading CSAP Assessment, Matched by % Minority and % Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Eligibility

	0-20% Minority & 0-20% F/R	**21 – 40% Minority & 21-40% FR**	**41-60% Minority & 41-60% F/R**	**61-80% Minority & 61-80% F/R**	**81-100% Minority & 81-100% F/R**
Charter Schools (N)	83.83% (23)	* (2)	-	-	* (1)
Core Knowledge Charter Schools (N)	86.58% (16)				
Non-Charter Schools (N)	79.0% (226)	60.48% (97)	51.63% (47)	43.74% (37)	23.08% (39)

(N) is the number of schools included in the calculation

*Results were not reported because N was fewer than 15.

Fifth Grade Reading

To frame the analysis, Table 12 compares the charter and non-charter schools by the number of fifth grade students who took the CSAP. Schools did not report results when fewer than 16 students took the test. Table 13 provides a demographic comparison of the charter and non-charter schools that reported 5th grade reading CSAP results.

Table 12: Comparison of Charter and Non-Charter Schools by Number of Students who Took the 5th Grade Reading CSAP

	Charter Schools		*Noncharter Schools*	
Number of Students	All Schools	Reporting Schools	All Schools	Reporting Schools
1-20	35.2%	2.9%	8.9%	1.5%
21-40	29.6%	41.2%	13.1%	13.4%
41-60	29.6%	47.1%	20.3%	22.1%
61-80	3.7%	5.9%	24.9%	27.2%
81-100	0.0%	0.0%	18.7%	20.3%
101-261	1.9%	2.9%	14.1%	15.5%

Table 13: Demographic Comparison of Charter and Noncharter Schools that Reported 5th Grade Reading CSAP Results

% Free /Reduced-Price Lunch			**% Minority**		
%	*Charter*	*Noncharter*	%	*Charter*	*Noncharter*
0%	26.5%	.1%	0-6%	5.9%	7.0%
.1-5%	35.3%	14.2%	6.1-10%	29.4%	13.8%
5.1-30%	26.4%	35.8%	10.1-30%	47.1%	36.1%
30.1+	11.8%	49.9%	30.1+	17.6%	43.1%
	N= 34	N=754		N=34	N=754
0-20%	82.4%	38.5%	0-20%	61.8%	43.5%
21-40%	5.8%	26.2%	21-40%	26.4%	25.5%
41-60%	3.0%	17.5%	41-60%	0.0%	13.4%
61-80%	5.9%	12.6%	61-80%	5.9%	8.7%
81-100%	2.9%	5.2%	81-100%	5.9%	8.9%

Table 14 shows the results of the matching. In the 0-20%/0-20% quintile band for both percent minority and percent eligible for free/reduced-price lunch, the charter school average percent scoring at the proficient level or above was slightly higher than the state average for both charter schools generally and the Core Knowledge cohort specifically. The charter schools scores over 20 percentage points higher than the state average in the 21-40%/21-40% quintile for both the charter schools generally and the Core Knowledge cohort specifically. In the 81-100%/81-100% quintile, the charter school average was 12 points lower than the noncharter school average. The results for these quintiles are not included in Table 14 because fewer than fifteen schools fell into these categories.

Table 14: Charter and Non-Charter Average Percentage of Students Scoring at the Proficient Level or Above on the 5th Grade Reading CSAP Assessment, Matched by % Minority and % Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Eligibility

	0-20% Minority & 0-20% F/R	**21 – 40% Minority & 21-40% FR**	**41-60% Minority & 41-60% F/R**	**61-80% Minority & 61-80% F/R**	**81-100% Minority & 81-100% F/R**
Charter Schools (N)	84.38% (20)	* (2)	* (0)	* (0)	* (1)
Core Knowledge Charter Schools (N)	* (14)	* (2)			
Non-Charter Schools (N)	82.08% (219)	62.37% (88)	48.90% (36)	47.28% (34)	23.86% (40)

(N) is the number of schools included in the calculation.
*Results were not reported because N was fewer than 15.

7th Grade Writing

To frame the analysis, Table 15 compares the charter and non-charter schools by the number of fourth grade students who took the CSAP. Again, note that schools did not report results when fewer than 16 students took the test. Table 10 provides a demographic comparison of the charter and non-charter schools that reported 7th grade Writing CSAP results.

Table 15: Comparison of Charter and Non-Charter Schools by Number of Students who Took the 7th Grade Writing CSAP

	Charter Schools		*Noncharter Schools*	
Number of Students	All Schools	Reporting Schools	All Schools	Reporting Schools
1-20	32.7%	11.1%	17.3%	1.7%
21-40	29.5%	36.1%	12.2%	14.0%
41-60	24.5%	33.4%	6.3%	7.5%
61-80	8.2%	11.1%	4.3%	5.1%
81-100	4.1%	5.5%	4.8%	5.8%
101-619	2.0%	2.8%	55.1%	65.9%

Table 16: Demographic Comparison of Charter and Noncharter Schools that Reported 7th Grade WritingCSAP Results

% Free /Reduced-Price Lunch			**% Minority**		
%	***Charter***	***Noncharter***	**%**	***Charter***	***Noncharter***
0%	25.0%	.3%	0-6%	8.3%	11.6%
.1-5%	36.1%	12.4%	6.1-10%	%33.4	10.6%
5.1-30%	19.5%	41.1%	10.1-30%	%22.2	34.8%
30.1+	19.4%	46.2%	30.1+	%36.1	43.0%
	N= 36	N=292		N=36	N=293
0-20%	77.8%	38.4%	0-20%	%58.3	47.1%
21-40%	8.3%	30.8%	21-40%	%22.3	22.5%
41-60%	8.3%	19.2%	41-60%	%5.5	18.5%
61-80%	2.8%	7.8%	61-80%	%8.3	5.1%
81-100%	2.8%	3.8%	81-100%	%5.6	6.8%

Table 17 shows the results of the matching. In the 0-20%/0-20% quintile band for both percent minority and percent eligible for free/reduced-price lunch, the charter school average percent scoring at the proficient level or above was higher than the state average for both charter schools generally and the Core Knowledge cohort specifically. The charter school average was slightly higher than the Core Knowledge cohort average.

The score of the single charter school in the 21-40%/21-40%, and the single charter school in the 81-100%/81-100% quintile were lower than the noncharter school average. The single charter school in the 41-60% / 41-60% quintile was nearly 30 percentage points higher than the noncharter school average. These results for these quintiles are not included in the table because fewer than fifteen schools fell into these categories.

Table 17: Charter and Non-Charter Average Percentage of Students Scoring at the Proficient Level or Above on the 7th Grade Writing CSAP Assessment, Matched by % Minority and % Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Eligibility

	0-20% Minority & 0-20% F/R	**21 – 40% Minority & 21-40% FR**	**41-60% Minority & 41-60% F/R**	**61-80% Minority & 61-80% F/R**	**81-100% Minority & 81-100% F/R**
Charter Schools (N)	68.76% (19)	* (1)	* (1)	* (0)	* (1)
Core Knowledge Charter Schools (N)	* (12)	* (1)			
Non-Charter Schools (N)	51.79% (83)	35.16% (32)	23.89% (28)	* (9)	* (10)

(N) is the number of schools included in the calculation.
*Results were not reported because N was fewer than 15.

Ninth Grade Reading

To frame the analysis, Table 18 compares the charter and non-charter schools by the number of ninth grade students who took the CSAP. Again, note that schools did not report results when fewer than 16 students took the test. Table 19 provides a demographic comparison of the charter and non-charter schools that reported 9th grade reading CSAP results.

Table 18: Comparison of Charter and Non-Charter Schools by Number of Students who Took the 9th Grade Reading CSAP

	Charter Schools		***Noncharter Schools***	
Number of Students	All Schools	Reporting Schools	All Schools	Reporting Schools
1-20	32.1%	32.1%	26.2%	13.6%
21-40	32.2%	32.2%	13.6%	26.3%
41-60	28.5%	28.5%	6.9%	6.9%
61-80	3.6%	3.6%	5.7%	5.8%
81-100	3.6%	3.6%	4.2%	4.2%
101-851	0.0%	0.0%	43.4%	43.2%

Table 19: Demographic Comparison of Charter and Noncharter Schools that Reported 9th Grade Reading Results

% Free /Reduced-Price Lunch			% Minority		
%	*Charter*	*Noncharter*	%	*Charter*	*Noncharter*
0%	10.7%	6.1%	0-6%	17.9%	16.0%
.1-5%	14.3%	16.1%	6.1-10%	5.6%	13.3%
5.1-30%	35.7%	46.2%	10.1-30%	32.2%	30.8%
30.1+	39.3%	31.6%	30.1+	46.3%	39.9%
	N= 28	N=329		N=28	N=331
0-20%	53.6%	51.1%	0-20%	46.4%	53.8%
21-40%	25.0%	31.0%	21-40%	21.5%	21.7%
41-60%	14.2%	11.8%	41-60%	14.2%	11.2%
61-80%	3.6%	4.9%	61-80%	10.8%	7.0%
81-100%	3.6%	1.2%	81-100%	7.1%	6.3%

Table 20 shows the results of the matching. In the 0-20%/0-20% quintile band for both percent minority and percent eligible for free/reduced-price lunch, the charter school average was about the slightly lower than the non-charter school average. In the 21-40%/21-40% quintile the charter school average was 18 percentage points higher than the non-charter school average. In the 41%-60%/41%-60% quintile the single charter school scored significantly lower than the non-charter school average. Table 20 does not show the specific results for any of the quintiles because fewer than fifteen schools fell into each of the bands. The Core Knowledge cohort is not shown on Table 20 because the *Core Knowledge Sequence* applies to grades K-8.

Table 20: Charter and Non-Charter Average Percentage of Students Scoring at the Proficient Level or Above on the 9th Grade Reading CSAP Assessment, Matched by % Minority and % Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Eligibility

	0-20% Minority & 0-20% F/R	**21 – 40% Minority & 21-40% FR**	**41-60% Minority & 41-60% F/R**	**61-80% Minority & 61-80% F/R**	**81-100% Minority & 81-100% F/R**
Charter Schools (N)	* (8)	* (2)	* (1)	(0)	(0)
Non-Charter Schools	70.86% (110)	48.51% (25)	* (10)	* (4)	* (3)

(N) is the number of schools included in the calculation.
*Results were not reported because N was fewer than 15.

The number of both charter and non-charter schools shown in Tables 11, 14, 17 and 20 were less than the total number of schools that reported results on the respective CSAP assessments. This is because the matching process only captured the scores of schools with demographics that fell within the broad quintile bands. If, for example, a school served a high percentage of racial/ethnic minority students, but a low percentage of students who were eligible for free/reduced-price lunch, it would have fallen outside the quintile banks used for the matching.

6. Overall Academic Performance Rating on SARs

The Colorado School Accountability Reports, issued for the first time in the fall of 2001and covering the 2000-01 school year, rated the academic performance of public schools based on their overall CSAP scores from 3rd through 10th grade. CSAP is the only assessment taken by every child in the state and was designed to measure by grade level whether students are meeting state standards for what they should know and be able to do. CDE combined statistically the percentages of students achieving various levels of proficiency at each grade level to calculate a score for each academic assessment (reading, writing and math.) Beginning with the 2001-02 school year, ACT results will be included in the ratings calculation as well.

The school accountability reporting process applied five ratings of overall academic performance: Excellent, High, Average, Low and Unsatisfactory. For the baseline year (2000-01), the percent of schools at each rating was pre-set by the state based on a curve rather than a straight standard. This process allowed a better distribution of school performance. If CDE had rated schools on a straight standard the first year, approximately 56% of the schools would have fallen below average because they did not meet the requirement that 80% of their students were proficient or above in reading, writing and mathematics.

These preset percents for the ratings reflected logical cut-off points within the standardized normal distribution: 8% Excellent rating, 25% High Rating, 40% Average Rating, 25% Low Rating and 2% Unsatisfactory Rating. CDE did not rate a small number of public schools. Some charter schools were among the unrated schools.

In future years, the baseline established in each school's first SAR will remain the same, providing schools with low or unsatisfactory ratings the opportunity to improve and raise their rating. If academic performance continues to improve in Colorado schools, it is possible that no schools will receive an "Unsatisfactory" rating in the future. Additionally, now that the baseline has been established, in subsequent years the SARs will recognize the change in schools' performance – improvement or decline – from the previous year.

Schools that served multiple grade levels (elementary, middle and high) received separate accountability reports for each grade level. Separating out these grade levels allowed CDE to compare the academic performance of schools to schools of the same level. In other words, elementary schools were compared to other elementary schools, middle schools to other middle schools, and high schools to other high schools. As a result, a charter school with a K-12 program would have published three separate SARs, one for elementary school (1-6), one for middle schools (grades 7-8) and one for high school (grades 9-12).

Schools that received multiple Accountability Reports reported school wide data (e.g. K-8 or K-12) in the *About Our Staff, Safety and School Environment* and *Taxpayers' Report* sections of each report. In contrast, the *Main*, *Student Performance* and *School History* sections reported data specific to the grade level (elementary, middle, high) that was the focus of the individual report.

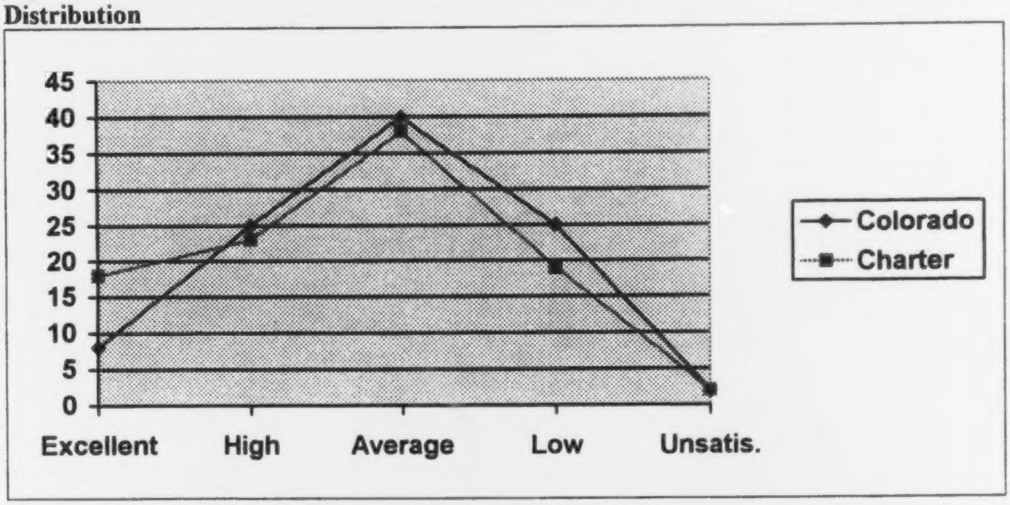
In all, the 77 charter schools that were operating in 2000-01 received 117 SARs, reflecting the fact that many charter schools serve students at more than one grade level (elementary, middle, high). Of this total,

- 18% (21 schools) were rated as "Excellent"
- 23% (27 schools) were rated as "High"
- 38% (45 schools) were rated as "Average"

- 19% (22 schools) were rated as "Low"
- 2% (2 schools) were rated as "Unsatisfactory."

Figure 12 shows this distribution of charter school ratings against the normal curve distribution that CDE applied to rank all public schools in the state. As the graph lines show, charter schools, as a cohort group, out-performed all public schools in Colorado, as a cohort group. The performance of the charter schools at the middle school level was particularly strong, while the performance at the high school level was weakest. An analysis of the SAR ratings by grade levels follows this section.

Figure 12: Distribution of Charter School SAR Ratings Compared to State Public School Distribution



Moreover, charter schools were among the highest performing schools on each CSAP assessment administered in 2000-01. While charter schools served 2.8% of the total public school enrollment and constituted 4.6% of all Colorado public schools operating in 2000-01, they represented:

- Three (30%) of the top 10 performing schools in the state in the 3rd grade Reading assessment.
- Two (20%) of the top 10 performing schools in the state in the 4th grade Reading assessment.
- One (10%) of the top 10 performing schools in the state in 5th grade Mathematics assessment.
- Three (30%) of the top 10 performing schools in the state in 5th grade Reading assessment.
- Five (50%) of the top 10 performing schools in the state in 6th grade Reading assessment.
- Six (60%) of the top 10 performing schools in the state in 7th grade Reading assessment.
- Seven (70%) of the top 10 performing schools in the state in 7th grade Writing assessment.
- Six (60%) of the top 10 performing schools in the state in 8th grade Science assessment.
- Five (50%) of the top 10 performing schools in the state in 8th grade Mathematics assessment
- Seven (70%) of the top 10 performing schools in the state in 8th grade Reading assessment.
- Three (30%) of the top 10 performing schools in the state in 9th grade Reading assessment.

ELEMENTARY

The 77 charter schools operating in 2000-01 ran 52 elementary programs. Of the 49 of these schools that received a rating:

- 18% (9 schools) were rated as "Excellent"
- 25% (12 schools) were rated as "High"
- 39% (19 schools) were rated as "Average"
- 14% (7 schools) were rated as "Low"
- 4% (2 schools) were rated as "Unsatisfactory."

Figure 13 shows the distribution of charter school elementary programs against the state distribution of all public schools. Table 18 contains the CSAP scores reported in the SARs for individual charter schools in the context of state and district benchmarks.

Figure 13: Distribution of Charter School Elementary SAR Ratings Compared to State Public School Distribution

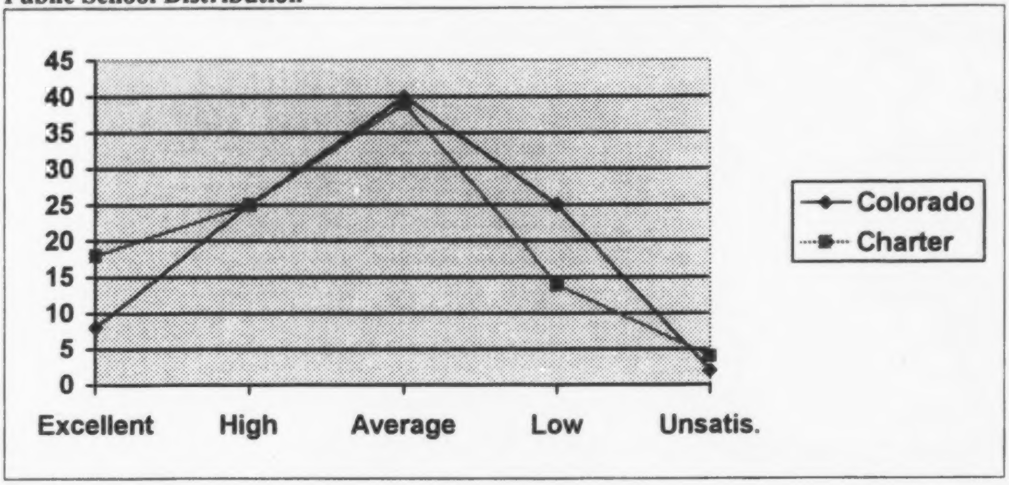


Table 18: Charter School Elementary CSAP Results as Reported in 2000-01 SARs

DISTRICT Charter School	READING Grades 3, 4, 5 and 6	WRITING Grade 4	MATH Grade 5
State of Colorado	***65%***	***37%***	***51%***
Academy School District 20	*83%*	*56%*	*73%*
The Black Forest School	57% (grades 3-5 only)	18%	33%
The Classical Academy	87%	59%	92%
Adams 12 Five Star School District	*60%*	*31%*	*43%*
Academy of Charter Schools	71%	11%	35%
Pinnacle Charter School	57%	29%	29%
Stargate Charter School	98%	64%	90%
Adams Arapahoe 28J	*46%*	*19%*	*28%*
Aurora Academy	59%	21%	29%
Boulder Valley School District	*78%*	*50%*	*68%*
Horizons Alternative School	91%	59%	88%
Peak to Peak Charter School	92%	81%	77%
Canon City School District	*71%*	*35%*	*41%*
Mountain View Core Knowledge	88%	81%	72%
Cherry Creek School District	*77%*	*54%*	*67%*
Cherry Creek Academy	91%	80%	82%
Cheyenne Mountain District 12	*89%*	*73%*	*84%*
Cheyenne Mountain Charter	96%	82%	67%

Table 18 (Cont.): Charter School Elementary CSAP Results as Reported in 2000-01 SARs

DISTRICT **Charter School**	**READING** **Grades 3, 4, 5 and 6**	**WRITING** **Grade 4**	**MATH** **Grade 5**
Colorado Springs District 11	*64%*	*36%*	*46%*
GLOBE	59%	0%	53%
Roosevelt Edison	49%	16%	47%
Denver Public Schools	*40%*	*17%*	*27%*
Challenges, Choices & Images	32%	0%	0%
Denver Arts & Technology Academy	38%	19%	11%
The Odyssey School	54% (grades 3-5)	29%	48%
Pioneer Charter School	22%	2%	14%
P.S. 1	Unreportable (grades 4-6)	Unreportable	Unreportable
Wyatt-Edison Charter School	36%	11%	29%
Douglas County School District	*81%*	*49%*	*70%*
Academy Charter	81%	48%	68%
DCS Montessori School	72%	28%	46%
Parker Core Knowledge	87%	58%	81%
Platte River Academy Charter	83%	62%	68%
Renaissance Charter	76% (grades 3-5)	44%	48%
Durango School District 9-R	*79%*	*Unreportable*	*Unreportable*
Community of Learners	33%	Unreportable	Unreportable
Eagle County School District	*69%*	*49%*	*54%*
Eagle County Charter	87%	59%	75%
East Grand School District	*Unreportable*	*Unreportable*	*62%*
Indian Peaks Charter School	Unreportable	Unreportable	44%
Elizabeth School District	*75%*	*40%*	*58%*
Elbert County Charter School	75%	42%	61%
Greeley School District 6	*52%*	*27%*	*44%*
External - UNC Lab School	64%	23%	45%
Frontier Academy	75%	39%	64%
Gunnison Watershed District	*Unreportable*	*Unreportable*	*Unreportable*
Marble Charter School	Unreportable	Unreportable	Unreportable
Jefferson County School District	*73%*	*46%*	*60%*
Center for Discovery Learning	27%	0%	14%
Collegiate Academy	77%	43%	44%
Compass Montessori	73%	27%	47%

Excel Academy	73%	20%	73%
Jefferson Academy	88%	58%	62%
Lincoln Academy	85%	48%	72%
Montessori Peaks Academy	75%	32%	57%
Rocky Mountain Deaf School	Unreportable	Unreportable	0%
Woodrow Wilson Charter Academy	70%	35%	36%
Keenseburg School District RE-3J	*60%*	*34%*	*34%*
Cardinal Community Academy	73%	22%	30%
Lamar School District	*56%*	*20%*	*39%*
Alta Vista Charter School	75%	36%	50%
Lewis Palmer School District	*84%*	*55%*	*68%*
Monument Charter Academy	90%	73%	73%
Littleton School District	*81%*	*55%*	*66%*
Littleton Academy	91%	63%	89%
Littleton Preparatory Charter School	74%	42%	63%

Table 18 (Cont.): Charter School Elementary CSAP Results as Reported in 2000-01 SARs

DISTRICT **Charter School**	**READING Grades 3, 4, 5 and 6**	**WRITING Grade 4**	**MATH Grade 5**
Moffat Consolidated No. 2	*Unreportable*	*6%*	*45%*
Crestone Charter School	Unreportable	0%	43%
Montezuma Cortez	*Unreportable*	*Unreportable*	*40%*
Battle Rock Charter School	Unreportable	Unreportable	100%
Park County School District	*70%*	*45%*	*42%*
Guffey Charter School	Unreportable	40%	Unreportable
Lake George Charter School	73%	43%	62%
Poudre School District	*76%*	*51%*	*61%*
Liberty Common School	90%	70%	79%
Pueblo School District 60	*64%*	*37%*	*59%*
Pueblo School Arts-Sciences	71%	29%	39%
Pueblo School District 70	*74%*	*38%*	*59%*
Swallows Academy	89% (grades 3-5)	73%	79%
Roaring Fork School District	*63%*	*28%*	*36%*
Aspen/Carbondale Community School	68%	14%	41%
St. Vrain School District	*69%*	*39%*	*55%*
Twin Peaks Charter School	85% (grades 3-5)	57%	56%

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Table 18 (Cont.): Charter School Elementary CSAP Results as Reported in 2000-01 SARs

DISTRICT Charter School	READING Grades 3, 4, 5 and 6	WRITING Grade 4	MATH Grade 5
West End School District RE-2	*Unreportable*	*47%*	*Unreportable*
Paradox Valley Charter School	Unreportable (grades 3-5)	20%	Unreportable
West End Learning Center	Unreportable	Unreportable	Unreportable
Westminster School District 50	49%	25%	38%
Crown Pointe Academy	84%	40%	71%

Date Source: Colorado Department of Education, Fall 2000.

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

The 77 charter schools operating in 2000-01 ran 56 middle school programs. Of these, 49 middle school program received the following ratings

- 25% (12 schools) were rated as "Excellent"
- 20% (10 schools) were rated as "High"
- 39% (19 schools) were rated as "Average"
- 16% (8 schools) were rated as "Low," and
- 0% (0 schools) were rated as "Unsatisfactory."

Figure 14 shows the distribution of charter middle school programs against the state distribution of all public schools. Table 19, which follows the figure, contains the CSAP scores reported in the SARs for individual charter schools in the context of relevant state and district benchmarks.

Figure 14: Distribution of Charter Middle School SAR Ratings Compared to State Public School Distribution

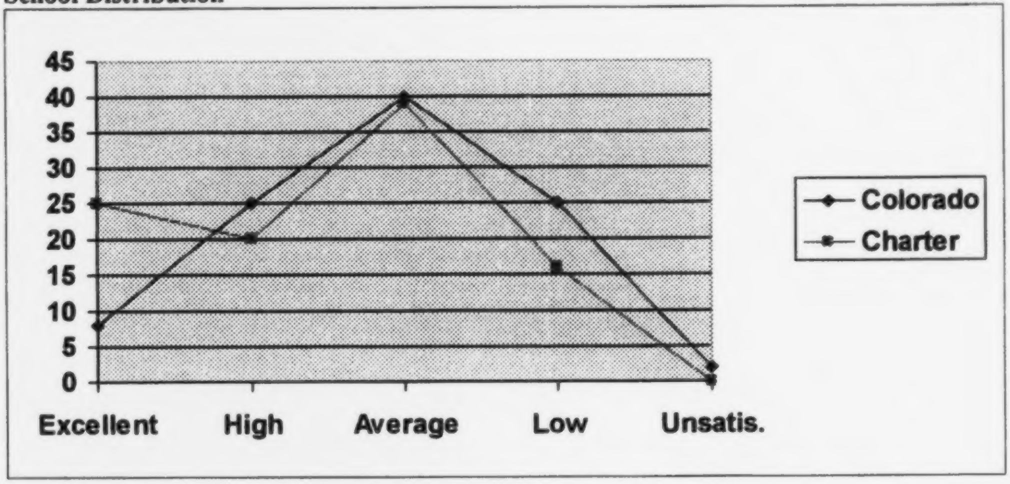

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Table 19: Charter Middle School CSAP Results as Reported in 2000-01 SARs

DISTRICT **Charter School**	**READING Grades 7,8**	**WRITING Grade 7**	**MATH Grade 8**
State of Colorado	***65%***	***37%***	***51%***
Academy School District 20	*82%*	*58%*	*57%*
The Black Forest School	Unreportable (grades 6-7)	Unreportable	Unreportable
The Classical Academy	(grades 7-9)	72%	71%
Adams 12 Five Star School District	*57%*	*30%*	*26%*
Academy of Charter Schools	61%	31%	34%
Pinnacle Charter School	51%	34%	28%
Stargate Charter School	98%	74%	96%
Adams Arapahoe 28J	*46%*	*22%*	*19%*
Aurora Academy	58%	40%	19%
Boulder Valley School District	*76%*	*56%*	*55%*
Horizons Alternative School	95%	81%	84%
Sojourner Charter School	29%	8%	15%
Summit Middle School	97% (grades 6-8)	91%	74%
Brighton School District	*52%*	*26%*	*15%*
Brighton Charter School	65% (grades 6-8)	31%	25%
Canon City School District	*61%*	*31%*	*31%*
Mountain View Core Knowledge	83%	60%	35%
Cherry Creek School District	*76%*	*57%*	*52%*
Cherry Creek Academy	91%	59%	40%
Cheyenne Mountain District 12	*85%*	*74%*	*66%*
Cheyenne Mountain Charter	100%	100%	62%
Colorado Springs District 11	*64%*	*39%*	*38%*
Emerson-Edison Jr. Academy	36%	27%	17%
GLOBE	56%	7%	30%
Denver Public Schools	*36%*	*18%*	*13%*
Community Challenges Charter School	7% (grades 7-9)	0%	0%
The Odyssey School	65% (grades 6-7)	27%	Unreportable
P.S. 1	49%	14%	7%
Wyatt Edison Charter School	32%	4%	19%
Douglas County School District	*81%*	*54%*	*57%*
Academy Charter	71%	54%	44%
Parker Core Knowledge	89%	59%	70%
Platte River Academy Charter	88%	70%	100%

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Table 19 (Cont): Charter Middle School CSAP Results as Reported in 2000-01 SARs

DISTRICT **Charter School**	**READING Grades 7,8**	**WRITING Grade 7**	**MATH Grade 8**
Renaissance Charter	75% (grades 6-8)	35%	33%
Durango School District 9-R	*75%*	*47%*	*47%*
Community of Learners	30%	13%	0%
EXCEL School	68% (grades 6-8)	33%	35%
Eagle County School District	*64%*	*46%*	*39%*
Eagle County Charter	82%	81%	55%
East Grand School District	*Unreportable*	*47%*	*Unreportable*
Indian Peaks Charter School	Unreportable	45%	Unreportable
Elizabeth School District	*63%*	*33%*	*38%*
Elbert County Charter School	72%	29%	33%
Greeley School District 6	*48%*	*30%*	*18%*
Colorado High School	10%	0%	0%
External - UNC Lab School	79%	45%	41%
Frontier Academy	53%	51%	26%
Union Colony Preparatory Academy	67% (grades 8-9)	Unreportable	14%
Gunnison Watershed District	*Unreportable*	*Unreportable*	*Unreportable*
Marble Charter School	Unreportable	Unreportable	Unreportable
Jefferson County School District	*71%*	*53%*	*45%*
Center for Discovery Learning	48%	27%	0%
Collegiate Academy	68%	32%	12%
Compass Secondary Montessori	55%	18%	14%
Jefferson Academy	79%	71%	53%
Lamar School District	*55%*	*31%*	*39%*
Alta Vista Charter School	72%	33%	33%
Lewis Palmer School District	*83%*	*57%*	*61%*
Monument Charter Academy	80%	65%	62%
Littleton School District	*79%*	*57%*	*52%*
Littleton Academy	90%	79%	60%
Littleton Preparatory Charter School	81%	42%	44%
Moffat Consolidated No. 2	*58%*	*Unreportable*	*11%*
Crestone Charter School	40%	Unreportable	40%
Park County School District	*Unreportable*	*Unreportable*	*Unreportable*
Guffey Charter School	Unreportable (grades 6-7)	Unreportable	Unreportable

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Table 19 (Cont.): Charter Middle School CSAP Results as Reported in 2000-01 SARs

DISTRICT **Charter School**	**READING Grades 7,8**	**WRITING Grade 7**	**MATH Grade 8**
Poudre School District	*74%*	*51%*	*49%*
Liberty Common School	86%	82%	41%
Pueblo School District 60	*51%*	*30%*	*21%*
Pueblo School Arts-Sciences	70%	47%	26%
Youth and Family Academy	10%	0%	0%
Pueblo School District 70	*68%*	*50%*	*41%*
Connect Charter School	90% (grades 6-8)	85%	83%
Swallows Academy	90% (grades 6-8)	84%	55%
Roaring Fork School District	*71%*	*47%*	*36%*
Aspen/Carbondale Community School	56%	20%	17%
St. Vrain School District	*66%*	*43%*	*37%*
Twin Peaks Charter School	83% (grades 6-8)	71%	64%
West End School District RE-2	*Unreportable*	*Unreportable*	*Unreportable*
Paradox Valley Charter School	Unreportable (grades 6-7)	Unreportable	Unreportable
West End Learning Center	Unreportable	0%	0%
Westminster School District 50	*49%*	*22%*	*27%*
Crown Pointe Academy	72%	52%	42%

HIGH SCHOOL

The 77 charter schools operating in 2000-01 operating 25 high school programs, of which 19 were rated. Of the 19 charter high school programs that received ratings:

- 0% (0 schools) were rated as "Excellent"
- 26% (5 schools) were rated as "High"
- 37% (7 schools) were rated as "Average"
- 37% (7 schools) were rated as "Low," and
- 0% (0 schools) were rated as "Unsatisfactory."

Figure 15 shows the distribution of Charter School elementary programs against the state distribution of all public schools. Table 20 contains the CSAP scores reported in the SARs for individual charter schools in the context of relevant state and district benchmarks.

Figure 15: Distribution of Charter High School SAR Ratings Compared to State Public School Distribution

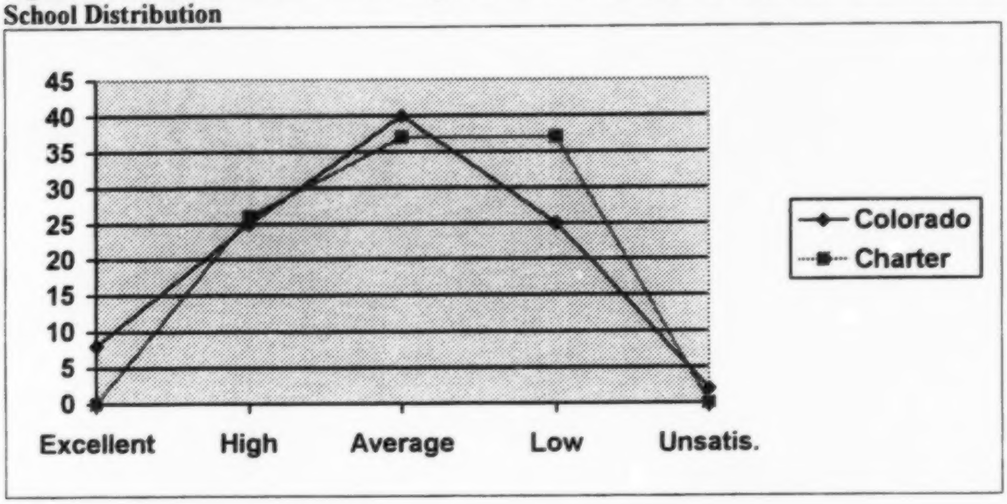

Table 20: Charter High School CSAP Results as Reported in 2000-01 SARs

DISTRICT Charter School	READING Grades 9,10	WRITING Grade 10	MATH Grade 10
State of Colorado	***63%***	***44%***	***14%***
Adams 12 Five Star School District	*59%*	*35%*	*9%*
Academy of Charter Schools	71%	53%	7%
Pinnacle Charter School	51%	42%	8%
Boulder Valley School District	*77%*	*60%*	*25%*
Boulder Prep Charter School	30%	20%	0%
Brighton School District	*52%*	*35%*	*4%*
Brighton Charter School	67%	36%	9%
Colorado Springs District 11	*63%*	*41%*	*13%*
CIVA Charter School	51%	20%	3%
Community Prep Charter	38%	22%	0%
GLOBE	64%	46%	0%
Denver Public Schools	*35%*	*23%*	*5%*
P.S. 1	59%	27%	0%
Durango School District 9-R	*77%*	*55%*	*16%*
Community of Learners	Unreportable	Unreportable	Unreportable
EXCEL School	56%	36%	9%
Greeley School District 6	*51%*	*34%*	*9%*
Colorado High School	12%	7%	0%
External - UNC Lab School	68%	43%	16%
Union Colony Preparatory Academy	77% (grade 10)	64%	18%

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Table 20 (Cont.): Charter High School CSAP Results as Reported in 2000-01 SARs

DISTRICT **Charter School**	**READING Grades 9,10**	**WRITING Grade 10**	**MATH Grade 10**
Harrison School District 2	*50%*	*23%*	*2%*
James Irwin Charter High School	79%	50%	5%
Tutmose Academy	42%	7%	0%
Jefferson County School District	*70%*	*50%*	*16%*
Center for Discovery Learning	37%	12%	0%
Collegiate Academy	75%	44%	3%
Jefferson Academy	82%	65%	13%
Moffat Consolidated No. 2	*48%*	*Unreportable*	*Unreportable*
Crestone Charter School	40%	Unreportable	Unreportable
Montezuma Cortez School District	*54%*	*29%*	*5%*
SouthWest Open High School	38%	22%	0%
Montrose School District	*64%*	*39%*	*12%*
Passage Charter School	33%	0%	0%
St. Vrain School District	*66%*	*46%*	*13%*
Ute Creek Secondary Academy	59%	23%	4%
Pueblo School District 60	*47%*	*29%*	*7%*
Pueblo School Arts-Sciences	80%	58%	8%
Youth and Family Academy	17%	8%	0%
West End School District RE-2	*Unreportable*	*39%*	*11%*
West End Learning Center	Unreportable	0%	0%

PART NINE
WAIVERS

The Waiver Process and Its Use by Charter Schools

In 2000-01, the Colorado charter school law did not provide an automatic exemption from certain state laws, rules and regulations to charter schools. Instead, the law extended to charter schools the operation of the same waiver provision that has been available to every public school district in Colorado since 1989.

This provision[55] allowed the state board of education to waive education laws (Title 22), and the rules and regulations promulgated under those laws, subject to standards providing for educational achievement and enhancement of educational opportunity. The stated purpose of the waiver statute is to advance educational achievement and accountability. Before the advent of charter schools in Colorado, districts invoked the waiver statute sparingly and primarily for minor issues. In the four years before the passage of the Charter Schools Act, the period from 1989 to 1993, the state board granted twenty waivers. Between 1994 and 2000, in contrast, charter schools sought and received over 1,250 waivers. During that same period (1994 to 2000), the number of waiver requests granted to public school districts remained modest.

There were several explanations for the expansive use of the waiver law by charter schools. The first was a practical one: as schools of choice, it was easier for charter schools to obtain the concurrences required by the waiver statute. Another explanation was that the budget constraints facing charter schools forced them to do business in a different way. A third explanation was philosophical. In order to implement a distinctive educational program, the great majority of charter schools have attempted to establish considerable autonomy from their chartering districts.

Efficacy of the Waiver Process

The cumulative record established by the annual evaluations completed over the past six years establishes that the process for permitting charter schools to secure waivers has been adequate to enable these schools to overcome statutory barriers to the successful implementation of their distinctive programs.

The focus groups of charter school administrators and board members conducted for this 2000-01 study of Colorado charter schools confirmed this conclusion. Participants in both focus groups agreed unanimously that the process applied by charter schools to waive state laws had been effective. All the schools represented in the focus groups had been able to procure all the waivers they sought. The focus group participants (charter school administrators and board members) stressed that their intent in pursuing the waivers was not to avoid accountability, but to gain the freedom to develop alternatives to the approaches contained in statute. (Refer to Part XIII for a discussion of the focus groups.)

In the early years of the Colorado charter school movement, however, the waiver application and hearing process required a significant investment of time and effort on the part of the charter schools, their chartering districts, and the State Board of Education. The enactment of HB 00-1040 vastly simplified the method by which school districts apply for waivers from statute and regulation for public charter schools. The process now has two steps:

- **Step One:** School districts need to include within the charter contract a list of the state statutes and regulations the school district would like the State Board of Education to waive on behalf of the charter school.

- **Step Two:** The school district must submit to CDE the signed charter contract and charter application within ten days of the initial contract or renewal contract along with a cover letter listing the state statutes and regulations the school district would like the State Board of Education to waive on behalf of the charter school. The letter must be signed by an official of the school district. The charter contract must be signed both by an authorized representative of the school district and the charter school.

The Colorado Charter Schools Act provides that if the State Board does not deny the waiver request in writing within 45 days after submittal of the request for release, the request will be deemed granted. If the State Board grants the requests, it may orally notify the local board of education and the charter school of its decision.

Waivers Secured by Colorado Charter Schools

Of the charter schools operating in the 2000-01 school year, 97% sought at least one waiver from the Colorado State Board of Education and 96% obtained multiple waivers. Table 21 shows the frequency and distribution of waiver requests across the individual charter schools. There is a definite pattern of waiver requests among the charter schools, despite the range of educational programs they offered. Table 21 lists the schools in order of when their charter was granted, not in alphabetical order.

A brief description of the statutes waived, including the number and percentage of charter schools that sought and received each waiver, follows.[56]

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-1-110-Effect of Use of Alcohol and Controlled Substances to be Taught**. This law requires schools to teach the effects, the social dangers of use and the illegal aspects of use of alcohol and controlled substances. Three charter schools (4% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 122-1-112-School Year-National Holidays**. This law designates the national holidays to be honored by public schools. Two charter schools (3% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-7-207 – School Building Advisory Committees.** This law provides that the advisory accountability committee for each school building shall make recommendations to the chief executive officer of the school relative to the prioritization of school expenditures. One charter school (1.3% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-9-106 – Local Boards of Education – Duties/Performance Evaluations**. This law requires local boards of education to adopt a written system to evaluate the employment performance of licensed personnel and specifies required components of such an evaluation system. Sixty-one charter schools (80% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-109(1)(a) – Local Boards of Education – Specific Duties/By-laws**. This law requires local boards of education to adopt written by-laws for their organization and operation. One charter school (1.3% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-109(1)(b) – Local Boards of Education – Specific Duties/Competitive Bidding**. This law requires local boards of education to adopt policies and prescribe rules for competitive bidding in the purchase of services, except professional services, in the district. Thirty-six charter schools (47% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-109(1)(bb)(I) – Local Boards of Education – Specific Duties/Tobacco Use**. This law requires local boards of education to adopt a policy mandating a prohibition against the use of all tobacco products on school property and at school-sponsored activities. Seven schools (9% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-109(1)(e) – Local Boards of Education – Specific Duties/Minutes of Proceedings**. This law requires local boards of education to record minutes of all board proceedings, except those of an executive session, and to open the minutes to public inspection during reasonable business hours. Two charter schools (3% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-109(1)(f) – Local Boards of Education – Specific Duties/Selection and Pay of Personnel**. This law requires local boards of education to employ all personnel required to maintain the operations and carry out the educational program of the district and to fix and order paid their compensation. Fifty-six charter schools (74% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-109(1)(h) – Local Boards of Education – Specific Duties/Bonding of Staff**. This law requires local boards of education to require the bonding of staff members. Four charter schools (5% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-109(1)(i) – Local Boards of Education – Specific Duties/Governmental Accounting Principles**. This law requires local boards of education to keep complete and accurate financial records of the school district by funds and accounts, maintained on the basis of generally recognized principles of governmental accounting. Two charter schools (3% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-109(1)(k) – Local Boards of Education – Specific Duties/Publication of Financial Condition**. This law requires local boards of education to cause a statement of the financial condition of the district to be published and posted as required by law, and to cause all accounted to be audited as required by law, and to review from time to time during each fiscal year the financial position of the district. Two charter schools (3% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-109(1)(n)(I) – Local Boards of Education – Specific Duties/School Calendar**. This law requires local boards of education to determine the length of time which the schools of the district will be in session. Thirty-one charter schools (41% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-109(1)(n)(II) – Local Boards of Education – Specific Duties/Teacher-Pupil Contact Hours**. This law establishes a minimum number of teacher-pupil contact hours, which the adopted school calendar must meet. Twenty charter schools (26% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-109(1)(t) – Local Boards of Education – Specific Duties/Textbooks and Curriculum**. This law requires local boards of education to determine the educational programs to be carried on in the schools on the district and to prescribe any textbooks for any course of instruction or study. Forty charter schools (53% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-109(1)(z) – Local Boards of Education – Specific Duties/Child Abuse and Neglect Training**. This law requires local boards of education to provide for a periodic in-service program for all district teachers which provides information to assist teachers in recognizing child abuse or neglect and how to report suspected incidences of child abuse or neglect. Sixteen charter schools (21% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-109.7 – Local Boards of Education – Specific Duties – Employment of Personnel**. This law specifies the duties of local boards with regard to conducting background checks of employees, including criminal background check and contacts with previous employers. Nine charter schools (13% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-109.8 – Applicants Selected for Non-licensed Positions – Submittal of Form and Fingerprints – Prohibition against Employing Persons Failing to Comply.** This law requires local boards of education to require potential employees to submit a set of fingerprints and to release the fingerprints to the Colorado Bureau of Investigation for processing. Eight charter schools (11% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-109.9 – Licensed Personnel – Submittal of Fingerprints**. This law requires local boards of education to require fingerprints from any licensed personnel employed on or after January 1, 1991, whom the district believes has been convicted of any felony or misdemeanor (not including misdemeanor traffic offense or traffic infractions), subsequent to such employment. Eight charter schools (11% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-110(1)(h) – Local Board Powers/Terminate Employment of Personnel.** This law gives local boards of education the power to discharge or otherwise terminate the employment of any personnel. Forty-four charter schools (58% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-110(1)(i) – Local Board Powers/Reimburse Employees for Expenses.** This law gives local boards of education the power to reimburse employees for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. Twenty-eight charter schools (37% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-110(1)(j) – Local Board Powers/Procure Insurance.** This law gives local boards of education the power to procure group life, health or accident insurance covering employees of the district. Eighteen charter schools (24% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-110(1)(k) – Local Board Powers/Policies Related to Inservice Training and Official Conduct.** This law gives local boards of education the power to adopt written policies related to the in-service training, professional growth, safety, official conduct, and welfare of the employees. Thirty-five charter schools (46% of the cohort) received this waiver.
- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-110(1)(y) – Local Board Powers/Accept Gifts and Donations.** This law gives local boards of education the power to accept gifts, donations or grants to any kind made to the district and to expend or sue said gifts, donations or grants in accordance with the conditions prescribed by the donor. Fourteen charter schools (18% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-110(1)(ee) – Local Board Powers/Employ Teachers' Aides and Other Nonlicensed Personnel.** This law gives local boards of education the power to employ teachers' aides and other auxiliary, nonlicensed personnel to assist licensed personnel in the provision of services related to instruction or supervision of children. Thirty-five charter schools (46% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-116.5 – Extracurricular and Interscholastic Activities** . This law requires school districts to allow any student enrolled in a school or participating in a nonpublic home-based educational program to participate on an equal basis in any activity offered by the school district that is not offered at the student's school or attendance or through the students' nonpublic home-based educational program and describes the minimum processes for assuring such participation. One charter school (1.3% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-119 – Kindergartens.** This law gives local boards of education the power to establish and maintain kindergartens for the instruction of children one year prior to the year in which they would be eligible for admission to the first grade. Such kindergartens shall be a part of the public school system. Twelve charter schools (16% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-120 – Food Services**. This law gives local boards of education the power to establish, maintain, equip and operate a food-service facility and sets minimum requirements for the operation of such a facility. Four charter schools (5% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-32-126 – Principals - Employment and Authority**. This law gives local boards of education the power to employ principals who shall hold valid supervisory or administrative certificates to supervise the operation and management of the school and sets forth the responsibilities and duties of the principal. Sixty-five charter schools (86% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-33-102(1) – Definition of Academic Year**. This subsection defines the "academic year" during which the public schools are in regular session. Two charter schools (3% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-33-104(4) – Compulsory School Attendance**. This subsection requires local boards of education to adopt a written policy setting out the district's attendance requirements, enumerates exclusions from compulsory attendance. Such attendance policy may include appropriate penalties for nonattendance due to unexcused absences. Ten charter schools (13% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-33-105 – Suspensions, Expulsions and Denial of Admission**. This law relates to the suspension, expulsion and denial of admission of students from public schools. Fourteen charter schools (18% of the cohort) received this waiver.
- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-33-107 – Enforcement of Compulsory School Attendance**. This law requires local boards of education to enforce the provisions of the district's compulsory attendance policy through a variety of policies and procedures. Seven charter schools (9% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-33-108 – Judicial Proceedings.** This law concerns court proceedings initiated by local boards of education to compel compliance with the compulsory attendance statute. Nine charter schools (13% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-44-112 – Transfer of Moneys**. This law establishes the manner in which local boards of education can transfer moneys from one fund to another. Two charter schools (3% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-45-103 – Funds**. This law establishes various funds created for each school district for purposes specified in the Financial Policies and Procedure Act. Three charter schools (4% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-63-201 – Teacher Employment – License Required – Exception.** This law prohibits a local board of education from entering an employment contract with any person as a teacher, unless such person holds a provisional or professional teacher's license or authorization. Sixty-three charter schools (83% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-63-202 – Employment Contracts – Contracts to be in Writing – Duration -Damage Provisions.** This law prohibits a local board of education from entering an employment contract with any person as a teacher, unless such person holds a provisional or professional teacher's license or authorization. Fifty-seven charter schools (75% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-63-203 – Probationary Teachers – Renewal and Nonrenewal of Employment Contracts.** This law relates to the employment of probationary teachers, teachers employed during the first three years of their full-time continuous employment with a school district. Sixty-two charter schools (82% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-63-204 – Interest Prohibited.** This statute makes it unlawful for any teacher to take or receive any part of moneys from the sale of any book, musical instrument, school supplies or other materials. Ten charter schools (13% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-63-205 – Exchange of Teachers.** This law gives local boards of education authority to provide for the exchange of teachers with a school district in Colorado, in another state or in a foreign country and describes the salary arrangements for such teachers. Seventeen charter schools (23% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-63-206 – Transfer - Compensation.** This statute gives school districts the authority to transfer teachers from one school, position or grade level to another within the district and addresses the compensation of teachers so transferred. Sixty-three charter schools (83% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-63-301 – Grounds for Dismissal.** This statute enumerates the grounds for dismissing a teacher. Sixty-six charter schools (87% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-63-302 – Procedure for Dismissal – Judicial Review.** This statute sets forth a process, including judicial review, which school districts must follow for dismissing teachers. Sixty-eight charter schools (89% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-63-401 – Salary Schedule – Adoptions – Changes.** This statute requires local boards of education to adopt a salary schedule, a teacher salary policy based on the level of performance demonstrated by the teacher or a combination of the salary schedule and salary policy. The law prohibits changes in the salary schedule or policy during the school year so as to reduce teacher salaries. Sixty-four charter schools (84% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-63-402 – Services - Disbursements.** This statute provides that a warrant for the disbursement of school district moneys shall not be drawn in favor of any person for services as a teacher, unless such person either holds a valid teacher's license or authorization from the department of education. Sixty-three charter schools (83% of the cohort) received this waiver.

- **Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-63-403 – Payment of Salaries.** This statute provides that if a teacher's employment is terminated prior to the end of the employment contract and prior to receiving all salary installments, the teacher is entitled to a pro rata share of the salary installments for the period during which no services are required to be performed, except as provided by law. Fifty-two charter schools (68% of the cohort) received this waiver.

POINTS OF REFERENCE

National Charter Schools

Half of the 38 states with charter school laws automatically granted waivers from many state laws, rules and regulations. This typically meant that charter schools were freed from most state and district regulations, with a few exceptions (federal regulations, health and safety rules, and civil rights laws in many cases; also, insurance, state testing, compulsory attendance, minimum age requirements and desegregation requirements in a few others). Fourteen other states permitted waiver requests and/or waivers negotiated with the charter school authorizer. In states where wavier of regulations was left to a negotiation process, the amount of freedom realized by a charter school may have depended on the charter school authorizer's orientation and relationship with charter schools. Four states did not allow state laws to be waived at all, but may have permitted limited waivers of other policies and regulations.[57]

In general, charter schools were not exempted from state student assessment or budgeting/auditing requirements. "Although charter schools represent a growing effort to rethink accountability, they remain public schools, and the agencies that sponsor them retain many of the same monitoring responsibilities that have always been in place."[58]

Compared with the limited flexibility on state assessments and budget/auditing requirements, greater flexibility was apparent in domains related to teacher preparation and collective bargaining agreements. "These freedoms may seem relatively modest, particularly because of the charter movement's emphasis on deregulation. However, it does appear that charters enjoy considerably more freedoms than other public schools, even when these other schools are eligible for such freedoms by waiver."[59]

At a national level, the extent to which charter schools had control over decisions and policies was closely linked to the type of agency that chartered them. In general, charter school authorizers that were not local educational agencies (e.g. agencies like state boards of education, institutions of higher education and special chartering boards) allowed charter schools greater flexibility and autonomy.[60]

Table 21: Waivers Granted to Colorado Charter Schools

Connect School, The	Academy Charter School	Pueblo Sch for the Arts & Sciences	EXCEL School, The	Community of Learners	Community Involved C.S.	Collegiate Academy	Stargate School	Clayton C.S.	Eagle County Charter Academy	Jefferson Academy	Battle Rock C.S.	Academy of Charter Schools	Core Knowledge C.S.	Community Prep School	GLOBE C.S.	Marble C.S.	Excel Academy	Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy	Cherry Creek Academy		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	**Statute**	
				CLOSED				CLOSED												22-1-110	Alcohol & Controlled Substance Education
	X												X							22-1-112	School Year - National Holidays
																				22-1-115	School Census - School Age
																				22-7-207	School Building Advisory Committees
X	X	X	X		X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	22-9-106	Local Board Duties Concerning Performance Evaluations
																				22-32-109(1)(a)	Local Board Duties Concerning Bylaws
									X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	22-32-109 (1) (b)	Local Board Duties Concerning Competitive Bidding
																				22-32-109 (1) (b)(II)	Local Board Duties Concerning Tobacco Use
																				22-32-109 (1) (e)	Local Board Duties Concerning Minutes of Proceedings Open To Public
	X	X				X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	22-32-109 (1) (f)	Local Board Duties Concerning Selection of Staff, and Pay
															X					22-32-109 (1) (h)	Local Board Duties Concerning Bonding of Staff Members
																				22-32-109 (1) (i)	Local Board Duties Concerning Governmental Accounting Principles
																				22-32-109 (1) (k)	Local Board Duties Concerning Publication of Financial Condition
		X							X					X				X		22-32-109 (1) (n) (I)	Local Board Duties Concerning School Calendar
		X												X				X	X	22-32-109 (1) (n) (II)	Local Board Duties Concerning Teacher-Pupil Contact Hours
	X	X							X	X	X	X	X			X			X	22-32-109 (1) (t)	Local Board Duties Concerning Textbooks and Curriculum
																		X		22-32-109 (1) (z)	Local Board Duties Concerning Child Abuse and Neglect Training
														X	X			X		22-32-109.7	Selection of personnel
														X	X			X		22-32-109.8	Fingerprinting
														X	X			X		22-32-109.9	Fingerprinting
									X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	22-32-110 (1) (h)	Local Board Powers-Terminate employment of personnel
									X		X	X				X			X	22-32-110 (1) (i)	Local Board Powers-Reimburse employees for expenses
	X																			22-32-110 (1) (j)	Local Board Powers-Procure life, health, or accident insurance
	X								X		X	X	X					X	X	22-32-110 (1) (k)	Local Board Powers-Policies relating to inservice training and official conduct
																				22-32-110 (1) (o)	Local Board Powers-Provision of Textbooks
									X		X	X				X		X		22-32-110 (1) (v)	Local Board Powers-Accept gifts, donations, grants
									X		X	X	X			X		X	X	22-32-110 (1) (ee)	Local Board Powers-Employ teachers' aides & other noncertificated personnel
																				22-32-116.5	Extracurricular & Interscholastic Activities
																				22-32-119	Kindergarten
																				22-32-120	Food Services
	X		X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	22-32-126	Employment and Authority of Principals
	X												x							22-33-102 (1)	Definition of "Academic Year"
												X							X	22-33-104 (4)	Compulsory School Attendance-Attendance policies and excused absences.
														X	X					22-33-105	Suspensions, expulsion and denial of admission
																				22-33-107	Enforcement of Compulsory School Attendance
														X	X					22-33-108	Judicial Proceedings-conduct/discipline
																				22-44-112	Budget-Transfer of Moneys
			X																	22-45-103	Accounting & Reporting - Funds
	X	X							X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	22-63-201	Teacher Employment Act-Requirement to hold certificate
	X	X			X	X	X					X		X	X	X	X	X	X	22-63-202	Teacher Employment Act - Contracts in writing, damage provision
	X	X			X		X			X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	22-63-203	Teacher Employment Act-Requirements for probationary teacher, renewal & nonrenewal
		X																		22-63-204	Teacher Employment Act-Receiving moneys from sale of goods
		X				X						X						X	X	22-63-205	Teacher Employment Act-Exchange of teachers out of state or foreign
	X	X			X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	22-63-206	Teacher Employment Act-Transfer of teachers
	X	X	X		X	X				X	X	X	X	X	x	X	X	X	X	22-63-301	Teacher Employment Act-Grounds for dismissal
	X	X	X		X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	22-63-302	Teacher Employment Act-Procedures for dismissal of teachers
	X	X			X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	22-63-401	Teacher Employment Act-Teachers subject to adopted salary schedule
		X	X			X				X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	22-63-402	Teacher Employment Act-Certificate required to pay teachers
										X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	22-63-403	Teacher Employment Act-Describes payment of salaries
1	15	15	6	0	8	10	6	0	12	14	17	20	15	21	18	17	10	23	21		

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Table 21: Waivers Granted to Colorado Charter Schools

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

P.S. 1	Renaissance School	Aspen Community School	Colorado Springs-Edison C.S., The	Crestone C.S.	Summit Middle School	Lewis-Palmer Charter Academy	Littleton Charter Academy	Swallows Charter Academy	Mountain View Core Knowledge C.S.	Guffey Community C.S.	Alpine C.S.	Pioneer C.S.	CIVA C.S.	Classical Academy, The	Union Colony C.S.	Lincoln Academy	Magnet School of the Deaf	Montessori Peaks Academy		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	**Statute**	
					X						CLOSED				No Waivers On File				22-1-110	Alcohol & Controlled Substance Education
																			22-1-112	School Year - National Holidays
																			22-1-115	School Census - School Age
																			22-7-207	School Building Advisory Committees
	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X			X	X		X	X	X	22-9-106	Local Board Duties Concerning Performance Evaluations
																			22-32-109 (1) (a)	Local Board Duties Concerning Bylaws
			X			X	X	X	X	X			X	X					22-32-109 (1) (b)	Local Board Duties Concerning Competitive Bidding
																			22-32-109 (1) (bb)(I)	Local Board Duties Concerning Tobacco Use
						X													22-32-109 (1) (e)	Local Board Duties Concerning Minutes of Proceedings Open To Public
X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X			X	X					22-32-109 (1) (f)	Local Board Duties Concerning Selection of Staff, and Pay
						X													22-32-109 (1) (h)	Local Board Duties Concerning Bonding of Staff Members
						X													22-32-109 (1) (i)	Local Board Duties Concerning Governmental Accounting Principles
						X													22-32-109 (1) (k)	Local Board Duties Concerning Publication of Financial Condition
	X		X			X	X	X	X	X			X	X					22-32-109 (1) (n) (I)	Local Board Duties Concerning School Calendar
			X				X		X				X						22-32-109 (1) (n) (II)	Local Board Duties Concerning Teacher-Pupil Contact Hours
	X		X		X	X		X	X	X				X					22-32-109 (1) (t)	Local Board Duties Concerning Textbooks and Curriculum
				X			X			X									22-32-109 (1) (z)	Local Board Duties Concerning Child Abuse and Neglect Training
				X					X				X	X					22-32-109.7	Selection of personnel
				X					X				X						22-32-109.8	Fingerprinting
				X					X				X						22-32-109.9	Fingerprinting
	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X					22-32-110 (1) (h)	Local Board Powers-Terminate employment of personnel
			X	X		X	X	X	X	X				X					22-32-110 (1) (i)	Local Board Powers-Reimburse employees for expenses
			X	X					X										22-32-110 (1) (j)	Local Board Powers-Procure life, health, or accident insurance
			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X					22-32-110 (1) (k)	Local Board Powers-Policies relating to inservice training and official conduct
																			22-32-110 (1) (o)	Local Board Powers-Provision of Textbooks
						X			X					X					22-32-110 (1) (v)	Local Board Powers-Accept gifts, donations, grants
				X		X	X	X	X	X				X					22-32-110 (1) (ee)	Local Board Powers-Employ teachers' aides & other noncertificated personnel
																			22-32-116.5	Extracurricular & Interscholastic Activities
			X				X		X							X			22-32-119	Kindergarten
	X															X			22-32-120	Food Services
X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	22-32-126	Employment and Authority of Principals
																			22-33-102 (1)	Definition of Academic Year
									X										22-33-104 (4)	Compulsory School Attendance-Attendance policies and excused absences.
			X				X			X			X						22-33-105	Suspension, expulsion and denial of admission
									X										22-33-107	Enforcement of Compulsory School Attendance
			X						X				X						22-33-108	Judicial Proceedings-conduct/discipline
							X												22-44-112	Budget-Transfer of Moneys
							X												22-45-103	Accounting & Reporting - Funds
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X		X	X	X	22-63-201	Teacher Employment Act-Requirement to hold certificate
X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	22-63-202	Teacher Employment Act - Contracts in writing, damage provision
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	22-63-203	Teacher Employment Act-Requirements for probationary teacher, renewal & nonrenewal
			X									X				X			22-63-204	Teacher Employment Act-Receiving moneys from sale of goods
X		X	X		X							X							22-63-205	Teacher Employment Act-Exchange of teachers out of state or foreign
X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	22-63-206	Teacher Employment Act-Transfer of teachers
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X	X	X	22-63-301	Teacher Employment Act-Grounds for dismissal
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	22-63-302	Teacher Employment Act-Procedures for dismissal of teachers
X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X		X	X	X	22-63-401	Teacher Employment Act-Teachers subject to adopted salary schedule
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X	22-63-402	Teacher Employment Act-Certificate required to pay teachers
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X		X		X	22-63-403	Teacher Employment Act-Describes payment of salaries
12	14	12	26	20	15	23	22	19	28	19	0	12	21	20	0	14	9	11		

Table 21: Waivers Granted to Colorado Charter Schools

40 Elbert County C.S.	41 Liberty Common School	42 Platte River Academy	43 Twin Peaks C.S.	44 Crown Pt Acad of Westminster	45 Pinnacle C.S.	46 Frontier Academy	47 Youth & Family Academy C.S.	48 DCS Montessori School	49 Horizons K-8 Alternative School	50 Colorado Visionary Acad	51 Passage C.S.	52 Prairie Creeks C.S.	53 Compass Montessori C.S.	54 Odyssey C.S.	55 Edison-Wyatt C.S.	56 Alta Vista C.S.	57 Colo High School of Greeley, The	58 Brighton C.S.	59 Littleton Prep C.S.	Statute	
			X							CLOSED							No Waivers On File			22-1-110	Alcohol & Controlled Substance Education
																				22-1-112	School Year - National Holidays
																				22-1-115	School Census - School Age
			X																	22-7-207	School Building Advisory Committees
X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X			X		X	X	22-9-106	Local Board Duties Concerning Performance Evaluations
				X																22-32-109 (1) (a)	Local Board Duties Concerning Bylaws
X	X		X	X				X										X	X	22-32-109 (1) (b)	Local Board Duties Concerning Competitive Bidding
	X			X														X	X	22-32-109 (1) (bb)(I)	Local Board Duties Concerning Tobacco Use
																				22-32-109 (1) (e)	Local Board Duties Concerning Minutes of Proceedings Open To Public
X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X			X		X	X			X	X	22-32-109 (1) (f)	Local Board Duties Concerning Selection of Staff and Pay
							X													22-32-109 (1) (h)	Local Board Duties Concerning Bonding of Staff Members
																				22-32-109 (1) (i)	Local Board Duties Concerning Governmental Accounting Principles
																				22-32-109 (1) (k)	Local Board Duties Concerning Publication of Financial Condition
	X		X	X			X	X	X			X						X		22-32-109 (1) (n) (I)	Local Board Duties Concerning School Calendar
	X		X	X			X	X										X	X	22-32-109 (1) (n) (II)	Local Board Duties Concerning Teacher-Pupil Contact Hours
X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X									X	X	22-32-109 (1) (t)	Local Board Duties Concerning Textbooks and Curriculum
	X						X	X				X						X	X	22-32-109 (1) (z)	Local Board Duties Concerning Child Abuse and Neglect Training
	X																	X		22-32-109.7	Selection of Personnel
	X																	X		22-32-109.8	Fingerprinting
	X																	X		22-32-109.9	Fingerprinting
X	X		X	X				X				X						X	X	22-32-110 (1) (h)	Local Board Powers-Terminate employment of personnel
	X		X				X					X						X	X	22-32-110 (1) (i)	Local Board Powers-Reimburse employees for expenses
	X						X	X				X						X	X	22-32-110 (1) (j)	Local Board Powers-Procure life, health, or accident insurance
	X		X				X	X				X							X	22-32-110 (1) (k)	Local Board Powers-Policies relating to inservice training and official conduct
																				22-32-110 (1) (o)	Local Board Powers-Provision of Textbooks
	X			X																22-32-110 (1) (y)	Local Board Powers-Accept gifts, donations, or grants
	X		X	X			X	X				X						X	X	22-32-110 (1) (ee)	Local Board Powers-Employ teachers' aides & other noncertificated personnel
			X																	22-32-116.5	Extracurricular & Interscholastic Activities
	X			X	X			X											X	22-32-119	Kindergarten
				X	X															22-32-120	Food Services
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		X	X	22-32-126	Employment and Authority of Principals
																				22-33-102 (1)	Definition of "Academic Year"
	X						X					X						X	X	22-33-104 (4)	Compulsory School Attendance-Attendance policies and excused absences.
	X			X			X											X	X	22-33-105	Suspensions, expulsion and denial of admission
	X						X											X	X	22-33-107	Enforcement of Compulsory School Attendance
							X											X	X	22-33-108	Judicial Proceedings-conduct/discipline
																			X	22-44-112	Budget-Transfer of Moneys
																			X	22-45-103	Accounting & Reporting - Funds
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	22-63-201	Teacher Employment Act-Requirement to hold certificate
X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X		X	X	X	X		X	X	22-63-202	Teacher Employment Act - Contracts in writing, damage provision
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X			X	22-63-203	Teacher Employment Act-Requirements for probationary teacher, renewal & nonrenewal
		X												X						22-63-204	Teacher Employment Act-Receiving moneys from sale of goods
		X			X									X						22-63-205	Teacher Employment Act-Exchange of teachers out of state or foreign
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	22-63-206	Teacher Employment Act-Transfer of teachers
X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	22-63-301	Teacher Employment Act-Grounds for dismissal
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	22-63-302	Teacher Employment Act-Procedures for dismissal of teachers
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	22-63-401	Teacher Employment Act-Teachers subject to adopted salary schedule
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	22-63-402	Teacher Employment Act-Certificate required to pay teachers
X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X		X	X	X	X		X	X	22-63-403	Teacher Employment Act-Describes payment of salaries
15	31	15	23	24	13	9	25	22	11	0	10	13	11	13	11	11	0	28	29		

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Table 21: Waivers Granted to Colorado Charter Schools

Lake George C.S. 60	Tutmose Academy 61	Sojourner School 62	Cardinal Community Academy 63	South West Open School 64	West End Learning Center 65	Black Forest School 66	Boulder Preparatory High School 67	UNC Laboratory School 68	Peak to Peak 69	Paradox Valley School 70	Indian Peaks C.S. 71	James Irwin Charter 72	Aurora 73	Woodrow Wilson 74	Ute Creek Secondary 75	Compass Montessori Secondary C.S. 76	Statute	
									X								22-1-110	Alcohol & Controlled Substance Education
																	22-1-112	School Year - National Holidays
																	22-1-115	School Census - School Age
																	22-7-207	School Building Advisory Committees
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	22-9-106	Local Board Duties Concerning Performance Evaluations
																	22-32-109 (1)(a)	Local Board Duties Concerning Bylaws
X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X	X	X		X		22-32-109 (1) (b)	Local Board Duties Concerning Competitive Bidding
X								X					X				22-32-109 (1) (bb)(I)	Local Board Duties Concerning Textbook use
								X									22-32-109 (1) (e)	Local Board Duties Concerning Minutes of Proceedings Open To Public
X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		22-32-109 (1) (f)	Local Board Duties Concerning Selection of Staff and Pay
								X									22-32-109 (1) (h)	Local Board Duties Concerning Bonding of Staff Members
								X									22-32-109 (1) (j)	Local Board Duties Concerning Governmental Accounting Principles
								X									22-32-109 (1) (k)	Local Board Duties Concerning Publication of Financial Condition
X	X		X			X		X			X	X	X		X		22-32-109 (1) (n) (I)	Local Board Duties Concerning School Calendar
	X	X						X	X				X				22-32-109 (1) (n) (II)	Local Board Duties Concerning Teacher-Pupil Contact Hours
X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X		X		22-32-109 (1) (t)	Local Board Duties Concerning Textbooks and Curriculum
X		X						X		X		X					22-32-109 (1) (z)	Local Board Duties Concerning Child Abuse and Neglect Training
																	22-32-109.7	Selection of Personnel
																	22-32-109.8	Fingerprinting
																	22-32-109.9	Fingerprinting
X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		22-32-110 (1) (h)	Local Board Powers-Terminate employment of personnel
X	X	X	X			X			X			X	X				22-32-110 (1) (i)	Local Board Powers-Reimburse employees for expenses
X		X	X	X				X	X			X	X				22-32-110 (1) (j)	Local Board Powers-Procure life, health, or accident insurance
X	X	X	X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X		X		22-32-110 (1) (k)	Local Board Powers-Policies relating to in-service training and official conduct
																	22-32-110 (1) (o)	Local Board Powers-Provision of Textbooks
	X			X							X	X					22-32-110 (1) (v)	Local Board Powers-Accept gifts, donations, grants
X	X	X	X	X		X				X	X	X	X		X		22-32-110 (1) (ee)	Local Board Powers-Employ teachers' aides & other noncertificated personnel
																	22-32-116.5	Extracurricular & Interscholastic Activities
			X						X				X				22-32-119	Kindergarten
																	22-32-120	Food Services
	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	22-32-126	Employment and Authority of Principals
																	22-33-102 (1)	Definition of Academic Year
										X			X				22-33-104 (4)	Compulsory School Attendance-Attendance policies and excused absences.
							X			X			X				22-33-105	Suspensions, expulsion and denial of admission
										X			X				22-33-107	Enforcement of Compulsory School Attendance
													X				22-33-108	Judicial Proceedings/Compulsory Attendance
																	22-44-112	Budget-Transfer of Moneys
																	22-45-103	Accounting & Reporting - Funds
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	22-63-201	Teacher Employment Act-Requirement to hold certificate
	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X				X	X	X		22-63-202	Teacher Employment Act - Contracts in writing, damage provision
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	22-63-203	Teacher Employment Act-Requirements for probationary teacher, renewal & nonrenewal
			X														22-63-204	Teacher Employment Act-Receiving moneys from sale of goods
			X														22-63-205	Teacher Employment Act-Exchange of teachers out of state or foreign
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X	22-63-206	Teacher Employment Act-Transfer of teachers
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	22-63-301	Teacher Employment Act-Grounds for dismissal
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	22-63-302	Teacher Employment Act-Procedures for dismissal of teachers
	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	22-63-401	Teacher Employment Act-Teachers subject to adopted salary schedule
X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	22-63-402	Teacher Employment Act-Certificate required to pay teachers
		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X			22-63-403	Teacher Employment Act-Describes payment of salaries
17	19	21	21	19	13	19	12	22	21	14	8	21	27	11	16	9		

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Table 21: Waivers Granted to Colorado Charter Schools

Community Challenge C.S. 77	Denver Arts & Technology Academy C.S. 78	Challenges Choices & Images C.S. 79	Totals Per Waiver Pages 1-5	Statute	
			3	22-1-110	Alcohol & Controlled Substance Education
			2	22-1-112	School Year - National Holidays
			0	22-1-115	School Census - School Age
			1	22-7-207	School Building Advisory Committees
X		X	61	22-9-106	Local Board Duties Concerning Performance Evaluations
			1	22-32-109 (1) (a)	Local Board Duties Concerning Bylaws
			36	22-32-109 (1) (b)	Local Board Duties Concerning Competitive Bidding
			7	22-32-109 (1) (bb)(I)	Local Board Duties Concerning Tobacco use
			2	22-32-109 (1) (e)	Local Board Duties Concerning Minutes of Proceedings Open To Public
X	X	X	58	22-32-109 (1) (f)	Local Board Duties Concerning Selection of Staff, and Pay
			4	22-32-109 (1) (h)	Local Board Duties Concerning Bonding of Staff Members
			2	22-32-109 (1) (j)	Local Board Duties Concerning Governmental Accounting Principles
			2	22-32-109 (1) (k)	Local Board Duties Concerning Publication of Financial Condition
		X	31	22-32-109 (1) (n) (I)	Local Board Duties Concerning School Calendar
			20	22-32-109 (1) (n) (II)	Local Board Duties Concerning Teacher-Pupil Contact Hours
			40	22-32-109 (1) (t)	Local Board Duties Concerning Textbooks and Curriculum
		X	16	22-32-109 (1) (z)	Local Board Duties Concerning Child Abuse and Neglect Training
			9	22-32-109.7	Selection of personnel
			8	22-32-109.8	Fingerprinting
			8	22-32-109.9	Fingerprinting
X		X	44	22-32-110 (1) (h)	Local Board Powers-Terminate employment of personnel
		X	28	22-32-110 (1) (i)	Local Board Powers-Reimburse employees for expenses
			18	22-32-110 (1) (j)	Local Board Powers-Procure life, health, or accident insurance
		X	35	22-32-110 (1) (k)	Local Board Powers-Policies relating to inservice training and official conduct
			0	22-32-110 (1) (o)	Local Board Powers-Provision of Textbooks
			14	22-32-110 (1) (v)	Local Board Powers-Accept gifts, donations, grants
X		X	35	22-32-110 (1) (ee)	Local Board Powers-Employ teachers' aides & other noncertificated personnel
			1	22-32-116.5	Extracurricular & Interscholastic Activities
			12	22-32-119	Kindergarten
			4	22-32-120	Food Services
X	X	X	65	22-32-126	Employment and Authority of Principals
			2	22-33-102 (1)	Definition of Academic Year
			10	22-33-104 (4)	Compulsory School Attendance-Attendance policies and excused absences.
			14	22-33-105	Suspensions, expulsion and denial of admission
			7	22-33-107	Enforcement of Compulsory School Attendance
			9	22-33-108	Judicial Proceedings-[illegible]
			2	22-44-112	Budget-Transfer of Moneys
			3	22-45-103	Accounting & Reporting - Funds
X	X	X	63	22-63-201	Teacher Employment Act-Requirement to hold certificate
X	X	X	57	22-63-202	Teacher Employment Act-Contracts in writing, damage provision
X	X	X	62	22-63-203	Teacher Employment Act-Requirements for probationary teacher, renewal & nonrenewal
X	X	X	10	22-63-204	Teacher Employment Act-Receiving moneys from sale of goods
X	X	X	17	22-63-205	Teacher Employment Act-Exchange of teachers out of state or foreign
X	X	X	63	22-63-206	Teacher Employment Act-Transfer of teachers
X	X	X	66	22-63-301	Teacher Employment Act-Grounds for dismissal
X	X	X	68	22-63-302	Teacher Employment Act-Procedures for dismissal of teachers
X	X	X	64	22-63-401	Teacher Employment Act-Teachers subject to adopted salary schedule
X	X	X	63	22-63-402	Teacher Employment Act-Certificate required to pay teachers
X	X	X	52	22-63-403	Teacher Employment Act-Describes payment of salaries
16	13	20	1197		

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PART TEN

SELECTED FINANCIAL ISSUES IN COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOLS

Funding

For the period covered by this report (the 2000-01 school year), the Colorado Charter Schools Act provided that charter schools and their chartering districts "shall agree to funding and on any services to be provided by the school district to the charter school." The Act required that the funding negotiated "cannot be less than ninety-five percent of the district per pupil revenues (PPR) multiplied by the number of pupils enrolled in the charter school." PPR is the funding for a district that represents the financial base of support for public education in that district, divided by the district's funded pupil count.

Seventy-five of the 77 charter schools operating in 2000-01 provided information about funding. The average rate of funding for these schools was 95.2% of PPR.

Charter School Facilities

During the 2000-01 school year, charter schools were located in a wide variety of facilities including public schools; a museum; renovated churches, warehouses, office space, grocery stores, strip malls, and industrial space; modular buildings, and others.

Of the 76 schools that reported data about their facilities, 62% leased or rented their facilities, 19% used facilities owned by the chartering district or donated by another organization, and 18% owned their own facilities.

The percentage of the charter schools' total budget that was allocated to rent or bond/mortgage payments averaged 9.8%. The percentage of budget allocated to rent by individual charter schools ranged from 27% to 0%.

Purchase of Services

The Colorado Charter Schools Act allows charter schools to contract with the authorizing school district or with third parties for the purchase of services.

Table 22, below, shows the pattern of charter school purchases in 2000-01 – which services were purchased from a third party, which from the chartering district, and which were provided in-house by the charter school. Each cell shows the percentage of charter schools operating in 2000-01 who purchased a particular service from a particular provider. The total of the cells across service categories exceeds 100% because some charter schools obtained the service from two or more different providers.

The services charter schools most frequently purchased from third parties were professional development services (61%), legal services (56%), custodial/maintenance services (42%) and insurance services (42%). The services charter schools most frequently purchased from their chartering district were special education (79%), insurance (51%) and student assessment services (53%). The services charter schools most frequently provided in-house were professional development services (65%), human resources type services (64%), accounting services (59%), custodial/maintenance services (58%) and student assessment services (58%).

Over one third (38%) of the charter schools did not provide food services in 2000-1 and more than half (56%) did not provide transportation services.

Table 22 – Patterns of Services Purchased by Charter Schools, 2000-01

NATURE OF SERVICE	Purchased from Third Party	Purchased from Chartering District	Provided In-House by Charter School	Service Not Purchased by Charter School
Insurance	42%	51%	9%	0%
Food Services	9%	39%	13%	38%
Custodial/Maintenance Services	43%	14%	58%	1%
Legal Services	56%	29%	23%	5%
Human Resources Services	17%	36%	64%	4%
Accounting Services	35%	38%	59%	0%
Professional Development	61%	33%	65%	1%
Transportation	10%	27%	16%	56%
Special Education Services	35%	79%	41%	0%
Student Assessment	35%	53%	58%	0%

The evaluation study also asked schools to identify those services, if any, that they were required to purchase from the chartering district as part of their negotiated charter contract. Seventy-one of the 77 charter schools operating in 2000-01 provided information related to this question. Of these, 26 charter schools (36.6%) were not required by the chartering district to purchase any services. The others were required to buy one or more services from the chartering district.

The service that authorizing school districts most frequently *required* charter schools to purchase from them was special education services, a requirement that affected nearly half (46.4%) of the charter schools that responded. In most cases, charter schools were required to pay a per pupil cost to cover the costs of special education using an "insurance model." (Refer to Part Four of this report for a discussion of special education services in Colorado Charter Schools).

The second most frequent requirement related to student assessment services. Sixteen schools (22.5%) were required to purchase student assessment services from the sponsoring district.

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Other services that chartering districts required charter schools to purchase from the district included:

- Insurance – 13 schools
- Data systems/Information services – Seven schools
- Administrative services – Six schools
- District Charter School Liaison – Six schools
- English as a Second Language services – Six schools
- Payroll – Six schools
- Accounting – Five schools
- Maintenance services – Five schools
- Business services – Five schools
- Financial Audit – Four schools
- Superintendent/School Board – Four schools
- Legal Services – Four schools
- Communications – Three schools
- Risk management services – Three schools
- Special education administration – Three schools
- Nursing services – Two schools
- Transportation services – Two schools
- District warehouse – Two schools
- Budget tracking – Two schools
- Records holding – Two schools
- Enrollment/Attendance – One school
- Professional services – One school
- Gifted/Talented – One school
- Vehicle Maintenance – One school
- Food services – One school
- Professional Development – One school
- Fingerprinting – One school
- Delivery service – One school
- County Treasurer – One school

It is interesting to note that not all the charter schools within a single authorizing district purchased the same set of required services. This probably had to do with other factors affecting the financial relationship between the charter school and the district, like whether the charter school was using a district facility. Perhaps more significantly, these differences likely reflect major changes in state law over the period in which districts negotiated contracts with the various charter schools they authorized. Recent changes in state law related to the financing of charter schools appear to have led many districts to rethink the services they provide to charter schools and the way they are charged to schools.

In the focus groups held in connection with this study (refer to Part Eleven) charter schools representatives discussed whether and how these requirements impeded the autonomy that is so central to charter school functioning.

POINTS OF REFERENCE

National Charter Schools

Averaging across all service areas in 1998-99, more than one-third of charter schools provided services themselves (36%), about one-third of charter schools used only an outside provider (34%) and slightly more than one-quarter of schools used the district as the sole service provider (26%). Newly created and pre-existing private schools were much more likely to provide services themselves or to secure services from an outside provider whereas pre-existing public schools were most likely to retain the district as the service provider. Charter schools most often acquired transportation (42%) and food programs (39%) from districts and purchased special education testing (36%) and social services (42%) from an outside provider. Charter schools most often provided themselves such administrative services as purchasing (57%) and custodial (45%) services. Charter schools most often purchased payroll (46%), accounting (38%), insurance (53%) and legal services (54%) from an outside provider. [61]

Transportation

The 2000-01 Charter School Data Matrix asked charter school administrators to provide information related to the kinds of vehicles they use in transporting their students and to the maintenance of those vehicles. Of the 77 charter schools operating in 2000-01, 76 provided data relative to these issues.

SMALL VANS

Seventeen of the 76 responding schools reported using small vans to transport students during the 2000-01 school year. Of these 17 schools, nine charter schools had one van in use, six charter schools had two vans in use and three charter schools had three vans in use. Two charter schools did not provide the number of vans in use.

SCHOOL BUSES

Four of the 76 schools reported using buses to transport students during the 2000-01 school year. Of these four charter schools, one school had one bus in use, one school had two buses in use and one school had four buses in use. The final school did not provide the number of buses in use.

VECHICLE MAINTENANCE

Ten (13%) of the 76 charter schools contracted with their authorizing district for maintenance of the charter schools' vehicles.

CONTRACTING FOR TRANSPORATION SERVICES

Over half (54%) of the charter schools contracted with their authorizing district for transportation services, most often for use in connection with field trips or athletic events, rather than for transporting students to and from school on a daily basis. In some instances, this arrangement took the form of a formal agreement between the charter school and the authorizing district, in other cases the charter schools contracted with the district on a case-by-case basis to secure the use of buses for specific events.

Federal Start-Up and Dissemination Grants

The Colorado Charter School Grant Program provided two grant opportunities to charter schools: startup/implementation grants and dissemination grants. The grants were competitive and student academic achievement was one of the most important criteria considered in awarding the grants.

During the 2000-01 school year, 28 Colorado charter schools received **startup/implementation grants** totaling $3,770,000. Charter schools used these funds primarily for the purchase of textbooks, furniture for the classrooms and professional development. Most of the schools that obtained these grant funds received no startup funding from their chartering district. Many new charter schools used grant money to hire an administrator early and provide professional development around their chosen curriculum prior to the opening of the school.

The Colorado **Dissemination Grant** Program has four distinct application areas: assisting new or developing schools, professional development, documentation of proven, research-based practices, and assisting public school conversion to charter status. In the RFP for the dissemination grant program, experienced charter schools must document their success in achieving student academic performance as measured by the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) and other assessments. Funded projects include a principal in training, teachers in training, curriculum unit development and distribution, curriculum consortiums, technology training, assistance with technology lab development, scholarly study, the collection of assessments, and the mentoring of new or developing schools.

Colorado awarded four dissemination grants in 2000 and three in 2001. The grants totaled $347,445 in 200 and $855,000 in 2001. Most of the awards went to consortiums supporting a particular research-based educational program. The Rural Charter School Network mentors new and developing rural charter schools in developing the project-based curriculum models used by the schools and provides governance training. The Rural Network recently provided board training to a small, rural school district with a newly elected Board of Education in the San Luis Valley.

The second consortium supported with dissemination dollars is the Core Knowledge Consortium. Almost 40% of charter schools in Colorado use the Core Knowledge curriculum, which represents the largest cohort of educational program models. The scope of this consortium's activities has enlarged with the addition of special education professional development activities, and the collection and distribution of Core Knowledge units on CD-ROM. The consortium also provides administrator training and the collection and distribution of assessments already developed at experienced Core Knowledge schools.

A third dissemination grant supported an experienced, experiential charter school in Denver to mentor new and developing experiential charter schools. Professional development opportunities were a focus of dissemination activities during the past year. Those activities continued without dissemination grant funds.

A fourth dissemination grant project focused on dissemination of best practices relating to standards and assessments in the classroom. The charter school has a reputation for expertise in standards and assessments and was able to conduct workshops at state and national conferences, partner with several Colorado charter schools, and document their best practices for distribution via the Internet. A project of a consortium funded last year provided technology assistance to new charter schools. Those activities expanded into a collaborative effort developed by the CDE's Charter Schools Unit and the Colorado League of Charter Schools to establish the Technology Assistance Program. Several experienced charter schools are now using the program to assist new or developing charter schools to develop comprehensive technology plans.

Information about start-up/implementation grants and dissemination grants awarded for the 2001-2002 school year is available on the CDE website at www.cde.state.co.us.

Flow-Through of Federal and State Funds by Chartering Districts

The *Charter Schools Expansion Act of 1998* requires states and local school districts to take steps necessary to assure that all charter schools have equal access to federal funds for which they qualify. CDE has included the requirements of the *Charter Schools Expansion Act of 1998* into the Colorado Department of Education's "Single Assurance Form" which all school districts must sign in order to qualify for any federal funds distributed through CDE.

Prior evaluation reports have highlighted concerns about district compliance with this law. To promote compliance, CDE has undertaken the following actions:

- CDE hosted meetings with nearly all of the 178 school district federal program directors during the year and disseminated information regarding the Charter Schools Expansion Act of 1998. CDE mailed meeting materials to those who were not able to attend.
- CDE updated the Single Assurance Form used by CDE to include the Charter Schools Expansion Act of 1998. All of Colorado's 178 school districts must sign the Single Assurance Form in order to access any federal funds.
- All CDE federal program coordinators received training on how to provide technical assistance to charter schools and school districts regarding the requirements of the Charter Schools Expansion Act of 1998.
- The department's Federal Program Directors Training workshops, held across the state's eight regional areas, included a summary of CDE's review for compliance with the Charter Schools Expansion Act of 1998.
- The Unified Grants Office, which must approve all RFPs issued by CDE (competitive or formula), reviews RFPs to ensure that they specifically address charter school participation and equitable access to funds by charter schools.

PART ELEVEN

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

In prior years, the evaluation process included a written questionnaire completed by charter school administrators. The questionnaire contained open-ended questions to elicit qualitative, descriptive information from charter operators related to areas of interest to CDE and state policymakers. To reduce the administrative burden on charter schools associated with the annual evaluation process, CDE conducted two focus groups of charter school administrators and board members this year in lieu of requesting the completion of a questionnaire. The focus groups were held on October 5, 2001 and October 22, 2001. In all, representatives from 13 charter schools participated in these groups, representing large and small schools, with a range of educational approaches, from throughout the state. To promote frank discussion, especially about issues regarding the relationship between charter schools and their authorizing districts, this analysis of the focus groups does not identify participants by name. The appendix contains the questions that framed the conversation in both focus groups.

The difference in experience among the schools represented in the focus groups was striking. Some schools enjoyed productive and trusting relationships with their authorizing districts. For others, the relationship was problematic, even adversarial. One purpose of the focus groups was to identify issues of concern to charter school operators. In reviewing this section, however, it is important to remember that the majority of participants spoke of their relationship with their authorizing districts in positive terms and expressed the opinion that their district wanted to see them succeed.

Lessons Learned

There has been remarkable consistency in the responses to this question over the six years that this evaluation study has been conducted. Key lessons reinforced by this year's focus group participants include:

Maintain Clarity of Mission. Charter schools need to be and stay clear about their mission and measurable educational goals. This clarity helps "define the school's boundaries to keep us from getting off track and trying to be all things to all people." It is also critical to hire staff who believe in and are committed to the school's mission and educational approach.

Foster "Institutional Resilience." This refers to the school's capacity to survive, with mission intact, the turnover of key board members and administrators "who have the passion and relationships that built the school." One way to accomplish this is by writing a clear provision in the charter that sets out a formal process for changing the school's mission. Another approach is to adopt a written set of "non-negotiables" – statements of what the school will be and do, regardless of who serves on the board or as the administrator. A third approach is to ease the transition from one board to the next with training or "pass the torch meetings." A fourth is to make a practice of documenting operational procedures and lessons the school has learned from successes, mistakes and day-to-day operations to create an institutional memory. The key to all these strategies is to consciously build an organization that is "bigger than any one individual."

Learn from Mature Charter Schools. The best way to learn is to "hook up with schools that have already been there." Focus group participants agreed that opportunities offered by CDE and the Colorado League of Charter Schools to link with other charter schools were beneficial, even when the philosophies of the schools are very different. Several respondents specifically endorsed the value and usefulness of the accountability process developed by the League, whether or not it is a required part of the formal renewal process by the authorizing district.

Work Constructively with the Authorizing District. Focus group participants spoke of the value of investing time and effort in developing a good working relationship with the authorizing district. One respondent noted that even if the district as a whole is not supportive of charter schools, there is usually a person in the administration who can become an ally and a source of good information. Most respondents felt for both pragmatic and philosophical reasons that charter schools should maintain and value their identity as district schools.

Focus on Prevention. Try to anticipate issues and problems that might arise and develop policies or procedures for addressing them in advance of their occurrence. Think it through *before* it happens as opposed to reacting to crises.

Work with an Attorney Early On. Several respondents emphasized the importance of hiring an attorney early in the process to assist the charter schools in its negotiations with the district and in developing its waiver application. Acknowledging that resources for this function were very limited, the respondents argued that good legal advice is an investment in establishing the school's operating parameters for years to come.

Hire an Experienced Administrator. Hiring a seasoned administrator has many advantages; this is not the place for a charter school to save money. An experienced administrator reduces the amount of "start-up" learning, makes it easier for the school to challenge the district when necessary, and bring knowledge related to the myriad of legal and reporting issues that affect charter and other public schools.

Help Parents Determine in Advance of Enrollment Whether the School Meets Their Needs. Invest time with families looking into the school *before* they enroll, so that they understand the school's approach and expectations for students and can determine if the school will be a good fit for their children.

Know the Authorizing District. Before a charter school operator files the original charter application and through ongoing negotiations with the district, it is important to understand the political structure and dynamics in the district. What are its concerns about and propensities related to charter schools? Who are the key players? This knowledge does not equalize the bargaining positions of the parties, but it may help charter schools frame their requests in terms that the district will find most acceptable.

Waivers

As mentioned in Part Nine of this report, focus group respondents agreed unanimously that the process for securing waivers of state law was effective to permit charters schools to pursue distinctive programs. Respondents consistently stated that they created their list of waivers from a needs-based analysis and did not automatically request a broad package of waivers. Respondents emphasized the value that legal counsel adds to the process of negotiating the package of state and district laws/policies to be waived with the authorizing district.

Required Purchase of Services by Districts

Part Ten of this report presents information about the pattern of services purchased by charter schools, including the services that charter schools were required to purchase from their authorizing district. The focus groups provided a forum for charter school representatives to talk about how these practices, particularly the required purchases from their districts, affected their operations and autonomy to chart a distinctive educational course.

Many respondents were satisfied with both the service requirements imposed by the district and the quality of the services provided by the district.

Other respondents expressed concern about having to pay a set per pupil cost for district services other than special education. Their sense was that the districts' costs for many of these services are largely fixed and that adding charter school students to the service mix only incrementally affects the district's bottom line. Several respondents were frustrated by being required to support a district charter liaison position because they felt the liaison's responsibilities were not well-defined and/or not well-aligned with the interests of charter schools. One respondent expressed concern about having to buy legal services from the district's attorney because of the potential for conflict where the charter school's interests and the district's interest are at odds.

Other respondents expressed frustration at the quality, timeliness or level of services provided by the authorizing district, especially when the district required the purchase of those services. Several respondents mentioned their sense that charter schools were treated like "stepchildren" of the district when it comes to scheduling services, always at the bottom of the list and at the district's mercy.

Finally, evidencing the range of experience among charter schools, one charter school representative indicated that his/her school wanted to purchase district services, but the district was not wiling to provide them to the charter school.

Charter School Autonomy

CRITICAL AREAS

The focus group participants agreed that the critical areas over which charter schools must have autonomy or decision-making authority in order to deliver distinctive programs included:

- The ability to hire their own staff and to apply their own hiring practices.
- The ability to determine their own curriculum, within the broad contours of state and district standards.
- The ability to purchase services from outside the district when they feel those services are superior to district services in quality or in pricing.
- The ability to make financial decisions.

Several respondents also noted that autonomy requires knowledge of the charter school law. As one respondent stated, "You can't be truly autonomous until you know enough to question the district" and its interpretation of the mutual rights and obligations of the parties under the law.

HINDRANCES

Again, the range of experience among charter school representatives was broad. Many focus group participants felt their charter schools enjoyed the support of their authorizing district and could not identify any practices on the part of the district that hindered charter school autonomy.

The experience of charter schools in other districts was clearly contrary. These charters frequently were frustrated and limited by requirements imposed by their authorizing districts. They also expressed concerns that the district approached them as adversaries – as a potential threat to or drain on the district. Respondents in these districts identified the following issues:

- *Financial Issues*. Some respondents described significant restrictions or requirements imposed by the district on the way charter schools can spend money and the procedures used for accounting. In addition, if the charter schools disagree with the amount of money the district retains before forwarding funds to the charter school, there is little practical recourse available to the charter school. Another expressed concern that charter schools were not getting the pass-through funds to which they were entitled, stating that schools need accounting expertise and time (which they do not have) to hold the districts accountable.

- *Waivers of District Policy*. The process for waiving district policies occurs as part of the negotiations on the original charter application. Some respondents noted that new policies, adopted by the district subsequent to these negotiations, tended to be applied to charter schools. One respondent noted an inconsistency between the district's requirement that the charter school adopt its own comprehensive policy manual and its tendency to apply all district policies not formally waived in the charter application to the school as well.

- *Getting Accurate Information*. Several respondents expressed frustration that district directives or interpretations were not always internally consistent and were sometimes contrary to the school's understanding of the law. These respondents wished there was a way to communicate directly from CDE without having to go through their district.

- *Compatible Data Systems*. There are strong practical pressures (and in some districts, outright requirements) to adopt data systems that are compatible with the district's, even if those systems may not be the most cost effective or the best suited to a particular school's needs.

- *Over-reliance on CSAP*. One respondent argued that in small charter schools, where the performance of one or two students can have a dramatic impact on the school's overall results, attaching major consequences to the results of a single assessment threatens charter school autonomy.

Several respondents brought up the lack of advantage that charter schools have in negotiating with the district, noting that true negotiation cannot occur when the parties hold very uneven degrees of power. Some authorizing districts apparently assume a "take it or leave it" bargaining stance on key issues, recognizing that the charter schools have no practical option but to accept the terms. Another respondent noted that its authorizing district negotiates with each charter school individually to eliminate the possibility that the charter schools could gain greater bargaining power by negotiating as a bloc. Another respondent said that the thorniest issue was determining when a charter school should press its legal rights. This respondent noted that when charter schools take on the district directly, no matter how well grounded their position in law or fact, they risk alienating the district even more, perhaps winning the battle and losing the war.

Monitoring/Reporting Requirements

The type and amount of reporting that authorizing districts require of the charter schools in their district varies broadly. Some districts have no formal reporting requirements; some require charter schools to file an annual accountability report. In other districts, the demands are greater and more specific, from requiring monthly financial, attendance and/or discipline reports and minutes of their board meetings and periodic record reviews. All charter schools represented in the focus groups participated in a complete financial audit on an annual basis.

In the majority of schools represented in the focus groups, the authorizing district invited charter school principals to regular meetings of district administrators but did not require their attendance. Most focus group respondents stated that they chose to participate in these meetings and found them useful. Participants also described experiences on both sides of the majority practice. Some respondents were encouraged by their district to participate and made to feel part of the proceedings. In other districts, participants felt marginalized and not very welcome at these meetings.

Renewal Process

Respondents whose schools had completed a renewal process generally agreed that the process was well-defined and constructive, allowing the schools to describe their educational programs more succinctly and accurately than in their original charter application. One respondent noted that the renewal process had been an effective tool in gaining more respect from the authorizing district.

Several respondents enthusiastically endorsed the accountability process developed by the Colorado League of Charter Schools (refer to Part Nine, Section 4). They noted, however, that this process is most constructive in an environment where people feel safe to identify concerns and opportunities for improvement, and are not worried about having these issues used against them in the renewal process. If schools cannot approach the self-assessment process in a spirit of honest self-reflection because of concerns that they need to "put their best foot forward," their investment of time and energy in the League's accountability process will not yield as rich a return.

Most Pressing Issues Facing Charter Schools

The schools represented in the focus groups identified the following issues as "most pressing" for charter schools:

- Facilities -- how to pay for them and how to address local planning and zoning issues regarding land use.

- People who enroll in charter schools are those who were "unhappy (in their prior school) and strong-willed enough to do something about it." This fact means that charter schools have to "manage a parent population that is engaged, active and sometimes disgruntled." Another respondent put it this way: Charter schools serve a "higher percentage of needy kids who were looking for options. Parents may be more difficult with higher expectations. They are proactive people who aren't afraid to buck the system. They are not rule followers." Another challenging dynamic of high levels of parent ownership and involvement is balancing the roles of parents and the professional staff.

- Several charter school representatives identified an enormous tension between their desire to offer personalized attention to every student and the need to grow in size to maintain financial solvency, especially with regard to building costs. These respondents viewed the purposes of achieving economies of scale and providing intimate learning environments at odds.

- "Creeping bureaucracy -- we need to be vigilant to respect the original intent of the law, which was to remove some of the bureaucracy from the lives of schools. Charters were designed to be able to approach education differently, but we keep getting rolled into the red tape. The amount of time required to satisfy the reporting demands is enormous. It adds to burnout issues for staff and administrators."

- Politics vs. Education. "Charter schools have to play politics on a whole different level than other public schools." One respondent expressed concern that proponents of using public funds to pay for private schools may use charter schools to advance their agenda, whether or not the charter schools themselves support this policy.

- Finding strong academic leadership. The demands of running a charter school often lead to high rates of burnout and turnover.

- State Accountability Law. Several respondents expressed concerned about the provision in state law that will convert unsatisfactorily performing schools that do not improve within three years to charter status. This process contradicts their belief that as schools of choice, charter schools are not intended to be all things for all people, to work for every student. They also expressed concern that this process will only exacerbate tensions between charter schools and their authorizing districts. Respondents also noted reservations about the process CDE applied to identify the schools that did not receive SAR ratings. While agreeing that it is appropriate not to rate all schools, exceptions should be applied with discretion because taking out the lowest performing schools shifts the whole bell curve. One respondent also noted that "alternative" education is not the same as dropout retrieval. Another respondent suggested that perhaps the bigger issue is whether nontraditional schools can compete in a standards-based state.

- Relationships with Authorizing District. One respondent expressed concerned that in districts with stable or decreasing enrollment, the charter schools are perceived as a "drag" on the other schools in the district. "In growing districts, charter schools are a relief valve (for overcrowded schools). Our school has opened a can of worms for the district." Another respondent noted the lack of an effective process for resolving disputes between districts and charter schools, or, put more simply, a way to for charter schools to "fight back." In this respondent's opinion, the arbitration provision is not an effective remedy because of its cost. Unless the school has a lawyer willing to contribute his/her time, the school cannot afford to fight. Besides, another respondent noted, "we're supposed to be educating kids." The more time administrators spend embroiled in power struggles with the district, the less time they have available to focus on the needs of their students.

END NOTES

[1] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-112(6)
[2] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-7-601(1)(f).
[3] In 1996, the Park County School District granted a single charter to operate two charter schools at different locations approximately 35 miles apart from each other – Lake George Community School and Guffey Community School. In 1999, Guffey Community School began operating under its own charter.
[4] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-102(2).
[5] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-104(1) - (3).
[6] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-104(4)-(4.5)
[7] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-104(5).
[8] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-104(6).
[9] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5.106(7). The right of charter schools to sue their authorizing district was clarified by the Colorado Supreme Court in *Academy of Charter Schools v. Adams County School District No. 12.* Refer to Part Three of the report for a discussion of this decision.
[10] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-107.
[11] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-105.
[12] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-106.
[13] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-106(2)
[14] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-106(3)
[15] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-108
[16] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-107.5.
[17] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-108.
[18] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-108 (3.5)
[19] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-108 (4)
[20] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-110
[21] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-110(3)
[22] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-110(4)
[23] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-111
[24] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-104(7)(b)-(c).
[25] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-104(4.5)(a).
[26] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-111(1)-(2).
[27] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-112(2)(a)(III).
[28] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-112(2)(a.5)(I).
[29] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-112(2)(a)(III).
[30] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-112(2)(a.7).
[31] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-112(2)(a.8).
[32] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-112(2)(b).
[33] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-30.5-112(2)(e)(3)(a)(I)-(III).
[34] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-42-104.5.
[35] *Board of Education School District No. 1 v. Booth*, 984 P.2d 639 (Colo. 1999),
[36] *The State of Charter Schools 2000 – Fourth Year Report*, January 2000. This Report covers charter schools in 27 charter states, including Colorado.
[37] *The State of Charter Schools 2000 – Fourth Year Report.*
[38] Elementary Schools were defined as schools serving PreK-5, PreK-6, K-4, K-5, and K-6.
[39] *The State of Charter Schools 2000 – Fourth Year Report.*
[40] *Catalog of School Reform Models.* (2001). Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory; www.nwrel.org/scpa/catalog/modellist/asp.
[41] *Catalog of School Reform Models.* (2001). Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.
[42] *Catalog of School Reform Models.* (2001). Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.
[43] *Catalog of School Reform Models.* (2001). Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.
[44] *Catalog of School Reform Models.* (2001). Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.
[45] *Catalog of School Reform Models.* (2001). Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.
[46] *The State of Charter Schools 2000 – Fourth Year Report.*

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[47] Colo. Rev. Stat. 11-30.5-104(3).

[48] Free and reduced lunch eligibility is a way to estimate the percentage of low-income students. For the period July 1, 2000 to June 30, 2001, a family of four with an annual income of $22,165 or less would qualify for free lunch under the federally funded lunch program. A family of four with an annual income of $31,541 or less would quality for reduced-price lunch.

[49] **Aspen/Carbondale Community School** is governed by the COMPASS Board of Directors. COMPASS is a setting for educational and community learning that was established in 1970. COMPASS houses nine learning projects that work in preK-8 education, teacher preparation, the arts, environment and community organizing. **Community Prep Charter School** (Colorado Springs District 11) is operated by the City of Colorado Springs, under the authority of the Colorado Springs City Council. Passage Charter School is governed by a seven-member board that includes the Montrose City Attorney, Director of Workforce Development, a drug and alcohol abuse specialists, a dropout prevention specialists, an early childhood specialist, a retired teacher/principal and a former mayor of the City of Montrose. **Pioneer Charter School**'s Governing Board consists of one University of Denver Trustee, two University of Denver faculty members (one serving in a non-voting capacity), one DPS representative, three parents, one DPS Board of Education member, three Pioneer Charter School Staff Members (serving in a non-voting capacity.) The school also has a Collaborative Decision Making Team comprised of parents, administrators and teachers. The Governing Board and the CDM make some policy decisions for the school; others are determined by DPS district policy. A board comprised of the four superintendents from the authorizing school districts governs **Prairie Creeks Charter School** (Strasburg School District). **Pueblo School for the Arts and Sciences** (Pueblo School District 60) is governed by a Site Council comprised of six parents, six students, six faculty members, a USC/District 60 Alliance representative, a Pueblo District 60 representative, a Sangre de Cristo Arts & Conference Center representative, business representatives from the Latino Chamber of Commerce and the Pueblo Chamber of Commerce and the USC Provost. **Youth and Family Academy** is sponsored by the Pueblo Youth Service Bureau (PYSB) and the PYSB/Youth and Family Academy Board has direct governance authority over the school's operations.

[50] The study cited involved a poll of charter school leaders taken by StandardsWork. Surveys were sent to 1,674 charter school leaders in December, 1999; 391 responded. The study found that 48% of respondents said they entered the charter school field because they wanted to "have an opportunity to achieve excellence," while 22% said they wanted to "escape the constraints of the traditional public schools system." *Education Week*, May 31, 2000.

[51] Henderson, Ann T. and Nancy Beda, Eds. (1996). A *New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement.* Washington D.C.: Center for Law and Education.

[52] *A New Generation of Evidence.*

[53] The exception, The Center for Discovery Learning (then known as Community Involved Charter School) was originally awarded a three-year charter by Jefferson County School District. The district subsequently renewed the school's charter for one year. Upon further review, the district renewed the school's charter for a five-year term, with an audit in the third year.

[54] The Community of Learners Charter School in Durango School District closed at the end of the 2000-01 school year.

[55] Colo. Rev. Stat. 22-2-117.

[56] To calculate the percentages shown in this part of the section, the number of schools that secured a specific waiver was divided by 76, not 77, the total number of charter schools operating in 2000-01. This is because Roosevelt-Edison Charter School and Emerson-Edison Junior Charter Academy operated under a single charter to which the waivers were granted.

[57] SRI International. (2000). *Evaluation of the Public Charter Schools Program: Year One Evaluation Report.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

[58] *Evaluation of the Public Charter Schools Program: Year One Evaluation Report.*

[59] *Evaluation of the Public Charter Schools Program: Year One Evaluation Report.*

[60] *Evaluation of the Public Charter Schools Program: Year One Evaluation Report.*

[61] *The State of Charter Schools 2000 – Fourth Year Report.*

Appendix

COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOLS 2000-2001 EVALUATION STUDY

Request for Data

School Name: ____________________

Name/Phone Number of Contact Person: ____________________

For all questions, please provide data as of the 2000-2001 school year.

DATA ITEM	2000-2001
Waiting List (as of end of 2000-2001 school year)	
What is the average tenure of the lead administrators employed by your school? Please calculate by dividing the number of years your school has been in operation (up to and including the 2000-2001 school year) by the number of lead administrators your school has employed during that period.	
Describe the composition of your governing board (e.g. please indicate the number of board members from each category listed). If the categories provided are not applicable to your governing board, please describe its composition below.	Administrators – Teachers- Staff – Parents – Community Members – Other -
Did your school use a required parent contract in 2000-2001?	
Total parent hours volunteered (or percentage of parents who volunteered) during the 2000-2001 school year?	
Does your school regularly administer a parent satisfaction survey?	
In what type of facility was your school housed during the 2000-2001 school year (e.g. converted store, school building, converted warehouse, modular buildings)?	
Did your school own its facility, rent its facility or use a facility owned by the authorizing district during the 2000-20001 year?	
If applicable, what percentage of your school's total operating budget was spent on rent or mortgage payments during the 2000-2001 school year?	
What percentage of the district PPOR did your school receive from the authorizing district for the 2000-2001 school year?	
Does your school implement a specific reform model (e.g. Core Knowledge, Expeditionary Learning, the Edison Project, Success for All, etc.)? If so, please identify the model.	
Is your school a designated Title I school?	

Please indicate whether, during the 2000-20001 school year, your school purchased the following services from a third party or third parties, from the authorizing district, or provided them in-house with your own staff. If services were purchased from more than one source, please check all applicable columns.

SERVICE	**Purchased from 3rd Party**	**Purchased from Authorizing District**	**Provided In-house**	**Not provided**
Insurance				
Food services				
Custodial/Building maintenance services				
Legal services				
Human Resource services – job postings, fingerprinting, reference checks, etc.				
Accounting services				
Professional development services				
Transportation services				
Special education services for students with IEPs				
Student assessment services				

Please list below or indicate on the above table any and all services that the authorizing district **required** you to purchase from the district during the 2000-20001 school year?

Does your school own any small vehicles that transport students for activity trips or route operations?
If yes, how many?

Does your school own any school buses that transport students for activity trips or route operations? If yes, how many?

Does your school have an agreement with the authorizing district to maintain the above vehicles?

Does your school have an agreement with the school district to provide transportation for activity trips or route operations?

Please check any and all assessments regularly administered by your school in addition to the Colorado Student Assessment Program.

California Achievement Test (CAT)	
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS)	
Degrees of Reading Power Test (DRP)	
District Content Standards/Curriculum Assessment	
Durrell Reading Analysis	
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)	
Nelson Denney Reading Test	
Stanford Achievement Test	
Stanford Writing/Reading Assessment	
STAR Math and Reading Assessment	
Terra Nova	
Test of Achievement and Proficiency	
Test of Adult Basic Education	
Woodcock Johnson	
Individual Learning Programs	
Student Exhibitions	
Student Portfolios	
Other:	
Other:	

2000-01 Colorado Charter Schools Evaluation
Focus Group Questions

1. What lessons have you learned during the time you have operated your charter school that would be useful to operators or developers of new charter schools?

2. Have you requested waivers that were denied by your authorizing district? By the state? If so, what reasons were given by the district (or state)? Has the denial limited your ability to implement the educational program described in your charter application? If so, how?

3. Does your authorizing district *require* you to purchase any services or goods from the district? Which goods and services? How does this requirement affect your operations, if at all?

4. In your opinion, in what critical areas must charter schools have autonomy from their authorizing district in order to meet their statutory functions? Is your school's autonomy hindered in these critical areas through either formal policy or administrative practice of the authorizing district? How?

5. What are the monitoring or reporting requirements regularly imposed by your authorizing district (e.g. principal's attendance at regular meetings, completion of regular reports, regular site visits)? How do these monitoring and reporting requirements affect your school's operations?

6. (For schools that have completed a renewal of their original charter application.) Describe the renewal process completed by your school. Was the process a useful tool for holding your school accountable for meeting the terms of its charter? How? Did the renewal process identify opportunities for improvement?

7. What are the most pressing issues that confront charter schools in Colorado today? How do these issues affect the ability of charter schools to succeed as organizations and to advance the academic achievement of their students?